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**Past, Present, and Future: Discursive Strategies for Navigating Through a
Career Transition from the Private For-Profit Sector to the Social and
Solidarity Economy**

par
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Abstract

Faced with the burden of managing their own career in a global economy era and with the looming threat of climate change, individuals are still responsible for finding the answer to the question of “how do they want to be”? For some, changing careers from the private for-profit sector towards the social and solidarity economy (SSE) is a way of assuaging these uncertainties while answering the previous question. To better help individuals make this transition, this thesis explores the subject positions constructed by participants when narrating their “private for-profit to SSE” transition. The combination of discursive psychology and critical discursive psychology has been used to examine how participants position themselves and what these positionings perform within the context of the interaction.

Through the data generated by the semi-structured interviews from the six participants, my findings suggests that the multiple identities individuals bring forth within their career transition discourse aim to resolve these three main challenges: addressing the concerns over their legitimacy, attempting to make sense and use of their past experiences and selves, and managing their personal and social expectations. By positioning as being aligned with the values of the SSE, as more aware, as having changed careers due to chance events, for example, participants build a story that gives coherence to their career path and its challenges.

This study contributes to the theory and practice of career counseling on the topic of career transitions as a general phenomenon and specifically for the “private for-profit to SSE” transition by identifying the discursive strategies individuals mostly rely on to construct a career that makes sense of their past, present, and future selves. It also confirms the applicability of some of the existing literature on career transitions within the context of the SSE.

Keywords: Career transitions, private for-profit sector, social and solidarity economy, non-profit, identity, subject positions, narratives, discursive psychology, critical discursive psychology.

Research methods: Qualitative inductive study, discursive psychology, critical discursive psychology.

Résumé

Face au fardeau de devoir gérer leur propre carrière dans l'ère de l'économie mondiale tout en naviguant à travers la menace imminente du changement climatique, les individus ont toutefois la responsabilité de trouver une réponse à la question de « comment désirent-ils être »? Pour certains, changer de carrière du secteur privé à but lucratif vers l'économie sociale et solidaire (ESS) est un moyen d'atténuer ces incertitudes tout en répondant à la question précédente. Pour mieux aider les individus à effectuer cette transition, ce mémoire explore les positionnements du sujet construits par ces derniers lorsqu'ils racontent leur transition du « secteur privé à but lucratif vers l'ESS ». La combinaison de la psychologie discursive et de la psychologie discursive critique a été utilisée pour examiner comment les participants se positionnent et ce que ces positionnements accomplissent dans le contexte de l'interaction.

À travers les données générées par les entretiens semi-dirigés auprès des six participant-es, mes résultats suggèrent que les multiples identités que les participant-es présentent dans leur discours de transition de carrière visent à résoudre ces trois principaux défis : répondre aux préoccupations concernant leur légitimité, tenter de donner un sens à leurs identités passées, et gérer leurs attentes personnelles et sociales. En se positionnant comme étant aligné-es avec les valeurs de l'ESS, comme étant plus conscient-es, comme ayant changé de carrière en raison d'événements fortuits, par exemple, les participant-es construisent une histoire qui procure une cohérence à leur parcours professionnel et aux défis qui s'y rattache.

Cette étude contribue à la théorie et à la pratique d'orientation professionnelle sur le thème des transitions de carrière en tant que phénomène général et spécifiquement pour la transition du « secteur privé à but lucratif à l'ESS », en identifiant les stratégies discursives sur lesquelles les individus s'appuient principalement pour construire une carrière qui donne un sens à leurs identités passées, présentes et futures. Elle confirme également l'applicabilité de certaines des littératures existantes sur les transitions de carrière dans le contexte de l'ESS.

Mots clés : Transitions de carrière, secteur privé à but lucratif, économie sociale et solidaire, OBNL, positionnement du sujet, narrations, psychologie discursive, psychologie discursive critique.

Méthodes de recherche : Étude qualitative inductive, psychologie discursive, psychologie discursive critique.

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1. Introduction

Our future generations are having feelings of hopelessness, despair, anger, and betrayal as an increasing amount of them are aware of the negative impact of climate change (Hickman et al., 2021; Léger-Goodes et al., 2022). A large number are experiencing some functional impact and have pessimistic beliefs about the future (people have failed to care for the planet; the future is frightening; humanity is doomed; they won't have access to the same opportunities their parents had; things they value will be destroyed; security is threatened; they are hesitant to have children) (Hickman et al., 2021). These major “negative” emotions caused by the anticipation of the consequences of climate change have been identified with the term “eco-anxiety” (Léger-Goodes et al., 2022). Eco-anxiety can lead to practical and adaptive responses because it causes people to think about the best course of action, but it can transform itself into maladaptive and paralyzing forms such as trauma and depression (Pihkala, 2022). As eco-anxiety looms over our current and younger generations, the imperative to address the root causes of environmental distress becomes increasingly clear if we let its maladaptive form cause our inaction.

By the end of the twenty-first century, the goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement is to reduce global greenhouse emission to limit the global temperature increase in this century to 2 °C and to try to push it even further to 1.5 °C. Based on the IPCC “Climate Change 2023 Synthesis Report: Summary for Policymakers”, crossing the threshold of 1.5 °C risks amplifying the impact of heatwaves, increasing the intensity and/or frequency of drought, heavy precipitations (Core Writing Team et al., 2023), etc. If we maintain the “business-as-usual” scenario and without a strengthening of policies, global warming of 3.2 [2.2 to 3.5] °C is projected by 2100 (Core Writing Team et al., 2023). Finding the best course of action is a daunting task as solving the climate crisis is beyond what a single individual can accomplish but instead requires collective action. The social and solidarity economy (SSE) may constitute this collective action that can tackle the climate crisis.

The social and solidarity economy (comprised of the “social economy” and the “solidarity economy”) is an umbrella term that “encompasses a set of organizations whose activities are driven by societal objectives, values of solidarity, the primacy of people over capital and participative

governance” (OECD, 2023). Associations, cooperatives, mutual organizations, foundations and, more recently, social enterprises are typical entities of the SSE. Their economic activities and relations prioritize social and often environmental objectives over profit motives. The SSE is fundamentally about reasserting social control over economy and relinking economy with society and nature (United Nations et al., 2023). As of 2021, the SSE accounts for around 6-8% of GDP in most European countries and nearly 10% of the labour force in France and Belgium. Closer to my home, in a statistical report published in 2019 on the social economy of the province of Quebec in 2016, there are around 11 200 enterprises in the social economy which accounts to almost 220 000 paid workers. These 220 000 workers represent 5.3% of all the workers (4 133 100) in Québec in 2016 (Québec, 2017). These enterprises generated an income of 47,8 G\$ (financial cooperatives, 41%, nonfinancial cooperatives, 38%, non-profit of the social economy, 18%, and mutuals, 3%) (Québec, 2019).

An interesting thought would be to wonder how society would look like if the SSE represents a much bigger portion of the economy. Guiding the younger generations towards a first career in the SSE may be a productive way to channel their frustration and anxiety into long-term action to improve ecological transition, but we should not forget about the possibility for the current taskforce to transition from the traditional private for-profit sector towards the SSE. Even if millennials and adults in Generation Z (in America) talk more about the need for action on climate change compared to older adults (Tyson et al., 2021), the potential for change could be greater if there is involvement from the latter, for example, through changing careers into a more environmentally and socially conscious sector. But how can this be carried out in our current era? How can we help better these individuals making the career transition towards the SSE?

In an economic era where jobs and life course patterns are deinstitutionalized and less predictable, individuals have the responsibilities of designing their lives and managing their career. To support individuals in their career, career counselors turned to the life-design model (Savickas & Savickas, 2019). In this model of designing their life and careers, identity construction becomes a central part of the process (Cohen-Scali et al., 2015; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Savickas & Savickas, 2019). Workers’ identities can become more complex and challenging due to transience and career path uncertainty. Changing careers from the private for-profit sector to the SSE is an example of an uncertain path as multiple types of transitions could be involved, such as changing

roles, changing values, changing environment, etc. It is not as clearly defined as going up the corporate ladder where steps required to take to go up are fairly straightforward.

The discourse on the path of life designing begins by defining career as a story that a person tells about their working life. “People use stories to organize their lives, construct their identities, and make sense of their problems” (Savickas, 2015). Based on this rationale for using narratives, life-design counseling follows the principles of meaning-making dialogue where the client is encouraged by their counselor to narrate an identity story with continuity and coherence, and then prompted to engage in adaptive action to pursue the life that they want to live. By holding those stories in the client-counselor relationship, clients reflect on their lives and dwell in their own stories. This retrospective reflection often destabilizes old ideas that block decision making and usually enable an awareness that leads to making a choice. Understanding the life-design approach demonstrates that narratives are an integral part of helping individuals to clarify choices, prompting transformative action and constructing identities (Savickas, 2015).

Often time, when studying career transitions from the perspective of identities, studies focused on the cause and effects of identities on the individual’s capacity to complete their transition (e.g., Pratt et al. (2006), Heslin et al. (2012), Baldrige and Kulkarni (2017), Thompson and Van de Ven (2002), Hennekam (2016)), but there is a knowledge gap in examining all the different identities involved since they typically examine only one identity in their studies (Ramarajan, 2014; Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021). There is a need to explore better the theme of identity within career transitions, more specifically the one I am interested in which are career transitions from the private for-profit sector towards the SSE.

Even when studies relied on narratives to study identity in career transitions, such as Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010) and Schlosser et al. (2017), they are using narratives to establish correlation between elements of identities and the transition outcomes, or they used narration as a means to identify the challenges career transitioners faced and to understand how their identities were affected. These studies did not attempt to investigate which identities were made relevant by their speaker when talking about their transition and how these identities were being constructed through language. Identities were, more often than not, moderating variables rather than a study topic in itself.

Discursive psychology (DP) and Critical Discursive Psychology (CDP) are particularly ripe for studying careers transitions from the identity perspective as they are respectively concerned with 1) examining how psychological concepts (e.g., identity) are used and managed in discourse and its implication for understanding both social interaction and psychology, and 2) “identifying the culturally available repertoires that shape our understanding of a particular topic and which define the subject positions available within that topic” (Wiggins, 2017). These theoretical approaches and the life-design model also share the same recognition of language as the source of action. This leads me to ask the following question: **how do individuals position themselves when they narrate their career transition, more specifically a transition from the private for-profit sector towards the social and solidarity economy (SSE), and what do these positionings perform?** The aim of this study was to expand on our understanding of the identities used to make sense of this type of transition, how these identities are constructed, and what these identities accomplished for these individuals.

Answering this question required me to first do a literature review in *Part I*. In this literature review, I sought to understand what a career transition means and implies both as a general phenomenon and in the context of the specific transition of “private for-profit to SSE”. There are multiple ways how a career can be defined depending on whom we are talking to, which can alter our understanding of the topic. This is why I chose a definition that was able to encapsulate these different interpretations of what a career is and that is aligned with the life design approach of career counseling in the global economy era (Savickas, 2015). Following on this definition of a career, a career transition essentially implies any changes that occur within an individual’s career, which does not only consist of changing from a role to another (interrole). There are also transitions implicating a new and different orientation taken to an old role (intrarole) (Louis, 1980). For the type of transition that I am studying (private for-profit to SSE), within this categorization, it suggests a complex interplay between different types of transitions (e.g., intercompany, interprofession, intrarole/extrarole adjustment, life-stage transition, etc.). This means that different research on different types of transitions involved in the context of “private for-profit to SSE” transition may hold results that could be relevant for that context.

Categorizing career transitions by types of transitions can be approach for studying the topic as it can orient the focus towards developing models of how individuals cope depending on the

type of transition they are undergoing, but career attitudes and behaviours have greatly changed since (Louis, 1980)'s article (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021). It is also difficult to properly categorize the "private for-profit to SSE" transition. A second way that I found for approaching studies on career transitions is through the five theoretical perspectives (career stage, decision-making, adjustment, relational, and identity) suggested by Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021). Their paper serves as a summary of the culmination of what has been studied so far on career transitions as a general phenomenon, how they have been studied (i.e., through the lenses of the five theoretical perspectives), and what is missing from the literature. What I have observed from their analysis is the centrality of identity within these perspectives. From the identity perspective, as previously explained, the researchers identified a knowledge gap in studying the interaction between multiple identities as most studies typically examine only one identity. They also suggest studying career transitions holistically integrating the five theoretical perspectives. The caveat is that these perspectives are interdependent and the use of theories across their studies is fragmented and inconsistent which makes it difficult to compare and theorize across career transition types.

To alleviate this issue, a third approach that I found was using the self-regulation model suggested by Akkermans et al. (2024) (see Figure 3.2). This model segments better the different variables and boundaries found across the timeline of a career transition. Their model is separated into three phases: before, during, and after phases. In this model, the temporal element is put forth by its disposition of the different variables and boundaries within the phases.

These different proposed perspectives and models will be relevant for positioning my study within the literature on career transitions and helping with identifying narratives people may use to talk about their transition. The five theoretical perspectives from Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021), and the variables and boundaries found within Akkermans et al. (2024)'s self-regulation model are also useful as they could represent the multiple ways of talking about career transitions that are available to us. They represent the landscape of the discourses on the topic of career transitions as a general phenomenon.

To verify how these studies are situated in comparison with the "private for-profit to SSE" transition, I then summarize articles addressing that specific context. What I have found is the predominant use of positivist approaches where cause-and-effects are studied. For example,

chances events are evaluated against the different ways an individual navigates in a new institutional setting (Niendorf et al., 2022; Schlosser et al., 2017) and its influence on prompting the career change Cohen-Scali et al. (2015); (Nelson, 2017); Schlosser et al. (2017).

Putting together the life-design approach of career counseling when defining careers, then taking into account the importance of identities that I observed in studying career transitions, and its temporal element, the notion of narrative career identity appears to combine our current understanding of career transition (chapter 4). Chapter 4 ties the studies referenced in the literature review and provides the rationale for using DP and CDP covered in *Part II*.

The results I found in *Part III* using this theoretical approach is that when individuals position themselves in certain ways when narrating their career transition, they are mainly attempting to resolve these three main challenges: addressing concerns of legitimacy, attempting to reconcile with their past (creating a code of conduct), and managing personal and social expectations. Changing careers into the SSE can be presented as a downgrade as it is less lucrative and less prestigious. Not being authentic appears to be a concern for these individuals, so to appear more authentic, thus legitimizing themselves, they would position as no longer dictated by the need of financial security and more aligned with their values, for example. Then, transitioning implies resolving discrepancies between their past selves and current identities. If they made the transition, what does it say about whom they once were. Individuals present both elements of continuity and discontinuity to justify their decision. They reconcile their identities through positioning as having changed careers due to chance events, as being more aware, etc. Finally, through this change, they appear to follow the restrictions imposed by the discourse of the SSE which is based in humanistic values for the most part. These restrictions, or framed more positively as *code of conduct*, is facilitated by the subject positions such as being driven by moral desire rather than only driven by interests, and not being selfish. These positionings are constructed through comparison with counterexamples of identities they do not want to emulate. Those representations become guiding principles for how they should behave in the future.

Understanding these discursive mechanisms and subject positions will further clarify on the directions further studies on “private for-profit to SSE” transitions should focus on as these challenges may represent what matters most to individuals when making this type of transition.

Part I

Career Transitioning

from the Private For-Profit Sector

Towards the Social and Solidarity Economy

– A Literature Review

In Part I, the base conceptual elements that are going to be built upon for the research questions will be presented. This part will be composed of the chapters 2, 3, and 4.

Chapter 2 will begin with the definition of a career, while providing the historical context of career counseling that leads up to this choice of definition. Then, using this chosen definition, I will expand on the notion of career transitions, and the different types of career transitions there are. This will serve for understanding more in depth what could be implied when one speaks of their career transition.

Further investigation into the mechanisms relevant for understand career transitions as a general phenomenon will be covered in chapter 3. This is an attempt to provide an overview of the landscape of the discourses on career transitions and to find the relevant conceptual elements that could be transferable for the “private for-profit to SSE” career transition as well as. What has been studied and what needs to investigate will be explored.

The literature review in chapter 2 and 3 will bring us to the chapter 4 where my exploration of the concepts of career, career transitions, and what we know about transitions towards the SSE will be unified through the idea of narrative career identity from which the methodology will be developed.

2. General Definitions

This chapter will provide the general definitions at the core of this study which are the definition of a *career* and the definition of a *career transition*. Understanding these concepts is important as it highlights the complexity of interpreting what these terms even mean and imply for an individual.

To define a *career*, I will begin by providing the historical development of career counseling since different economical eras necessitated different approaches towards managing a career. It allows us to be aware of the changing and subjective nature of that concept, and the implications on the choice of definition for my theoretical framework. Then, to build on this definition, I will define what a *career transition* is and what are the types of career transitions. This in turn allows us to appreciate the diversity of career trajectories and how the “private for-profit to SSE” transition could be categorized using those types of transitions.

2.1. What is a career?

At some point in our lives, we most likely have been asked the question, “What do you do?” and we most likely have uttered these exact same words to another person as well. More often than not, the “natural” and expected response to that question is to talk about what you do for a living. That answer involves a combination of naming your occupation, providing the title of your job and/or describing your role. The notion of a *career* encapsulates the essence of what someone does (for a living) which is partly explained by the job they occupy, and the tasks they perform at their work.

A person’s career represents a good portion of their life. Assuming a standard work week of 40 hours and an advised 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night, a person spends 34% to 38% of their waking hours working during that work week. It is no wonder that (to varying degrees) we adults find identity and are identified by the work we do (Gini, 1998). What you do engages with your skillset and with what you are good at, and it changes your network around you, for example those

whom you work with, and these factors can start to shape your sense of identity (Ibarra, 2018, interview).

But is your career what you do? Is it your occupation, your job or the skills that are required for you to complete your work? Before answering these questions, we will explore the history of career counseling as it will provide a better ground to understand the choice of definitions in this thesis. This overview of the history of counseling will also provide an understanding of the current context we live in. In this overview, some philosophies and approaches to counseling that fuels my choice of theoretical framework to analyze my data will be highlighted. It is particularly the last economic era (global economy) that will provide the reasons as to why I will be using the discursive analysis approach as my theoretical framework and to why I am specifically focusing on understanding identities. In short, the discursive analysis approach with a focus on identities is fitting with the life-design model adopted by career counselor to responds to their clients' needs of help in the "global economy". The life-design model is based on a social constructionist epistemology, which helps guide people with navigating in a modern global economy through the construction of their sense of identity. More details on this era will be provided shortly.

2.1.1. A brief history of career counseling

Work plays a central role in many people's lives and frequently intersect with other aspects of life. It is also an integral part of one's life story and can have an immense impact on their overall life quality (Brown & Lent, 2020a). People work for many reasons that can go beyond the need of survival if one is privileged enough to choose which kind of work they want to do. In that situation, work can function as:

- need fulfillment
- an individual's public identity
- personal identity or self-construction normative expectation, group identity, and social contribution
- existential response and aid to mental health.

Whether it is to earn a living and honour, contribute to society, achieve self-growth, give purpose in life, establish a public identity, advance a personal narrative, and provide structure to

life (Brown & Lent, 2020a), different levels of importance are attributed to these multiple complementary functions of work. The level of importance of these functions is dependent on the culture in which the individual resides. Particularly, the function of normative expectation is more prevalent within collectivist culture. For example, the choice of work is less based on a personal level, but in collaboration with the members of one's family, tribe or community (Brown & Lent, 2020a). Even within a same society, the nature of work changes due to many social contextual factors. Social norms, mass media, behavioural expectations, policies and regulations, cultural traditions, definitions of acceptable roles, beliefs and values shape and reinforce individual's behaviours as well as the form and substance of career guidance processes, programs, or systems (Herr, 2020). Increasing life span, changing family structures are examples of factors that may impact the individual's attitude (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009).

As society undergoes transformation, forms of career counseling also adapt to those changes to accommodate to emerging needs in finding work. In other words, when the social organization of work adapts to evolving trends or context, the society's methods for helping individuals make vocational choice may transform in important ways. For example, increasing popularity of higher education, shifts in employment demand from manufacturing to service sectors forms the historical context for the evolution of the career development field (Brown & Lent, 2020a).

Based on Savickas and Savickas (2019)'s history of career counseling, four distinct models and methods of career counseling evolved from the characteristics that defined each of these following economic eras: agricultural communities (1850-1899), industrial cities (1900-1949), corporate societies (1950-1999) and global economy (2000-2050). Respectively, these eras are associated to the helping method of mentoring, guiding, counseling and constructing.

2.1.1.1. Mentoring in Agricultural Communities (1850–1899)

During the “agricultural communities” era (1850-1899), when economies were based on agriculture, vocational assistance emerged (not to be confused with vocational guidance of the Industrial Cities era). Individuals were essentially assigned to their work role. Few occupational roles were offered in traditional societies as the social norm involved the children's inheritance of their parent's craft. Choosing a vocation in this era wasn't much of a problem experienced by young people as the choice was predetermined for them based on which family they were born in

and/or what the community needed. Starting at age six, most children would complete tasks on the farm or would work in town as an apprentice.

As the occupational alternatives began to increase with the transformation from agricultural collectivism to industrial individualism, society offered mentoring provided by *friendly visitors* (USA) and *voluntary visitors* (England). The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was then founded in 1844 to alleviate the programs of unemployment, vice, alcoholism, delinquency, and crimes caused by this shift towards commercial cities.

The YMCA had the mission to help young men, working youth, and apprentices by offering courses in reading, spelling, grammar, history, geography, writing, arithmetic, and the Bible. Their *youth mentoring* was based on the culture's rationalist philosophy and educators' pedagogical model. This mentoring promoted character education, which meant building self-discipline and habits of responsibility and morality (Super, 1929). The pseudo-science of characterology inspired the approach of helping youth with vocational choice and selection, but the method proved ineffective in meeting the needs of city youth.

2.1.1.2. Vocational Guidance in Industrial Cities (1900–1949)

Then, in the industrial cities (1900-1949), as workers move from the farm or village to the city, they had to choose one major work activity instead of the variety of chores done at home. The second phase of the Industrial Revolution (spanning from 1871 to 1914), with the invention of the electric motor and internal combustion engine, reinforced the social invention called *jobs* which would represent the major work activity of the worker. At that time, this *job* in the commercial cities consisted of repeatedly performing one specific task in one industry.

Problems emerged from this social organization in the city as people were forced to pursue consumption and accumulation. Moving from a homogenous community to a heterogenous city led to dissolved feelings of community, instilled feelings of isolation. Choosing and finding a job wasn't necessarily easy for the youth, as many people were simply lost in the city as they experienced disorientation, disjunction, discontinuity, dissonance, and disorganization.

Experts constructed scientific models and method to help youth resolve problems arising from poverty, vice and alcoholism, which quickly professionalized their practices. They viewed science

as the panacea for society's ill. These specialists celebrated the idea of individual differences in abilities and personalities compared to the collective approach in the previous era which influenced their construction of helping methods.

Organized vocational guidance began to take place within either the educational system or social welfare organizations as a new mechanism for assisting youth to choose their occupational alternatives. Its more systematic procedures differed from the youth mentoring techniques consisting of friendly visits between boys and the YMCA volunteers. The form that this new vocational guidance took consisted of three essential steps:

1. Increasing individual's self-knowledge using scientific tests
2. Gathering occupational information
3. Applying "true reasoning" in compared self and occupations to make a realistic vocational choice.

The central idea in this approach is that a match of the individual's ability to job requirements leads to occupational success, satisfaction, and stability. This model of vocational guidance isn't without its critics even if it remains highly effective in helping industrial societies that requires a matching of an individual's ability to job tasks. Vocational guidance is unnecessary in an agricultural economy and insufficient in a high modern economy.

2.1.1.3. Career Counseling in Corporate Societies (1950-1999)

The period from 1950 to 1999 was referred to as the high modernity where large numbers of workers moved to the suburb and the amount of national and multinational corporations grew. These corporations had a hierarchical structure shaped like a pyramid where many labourers were at the base, then a good number of managers and white-collar workers in the middle and a small number of executives at the top. Going up in the ranks became the metaphor of climbing up the corporate ladder which means that instead of doing specifically one job, you can progress within a company to receive more responsibilities and pay. Climbing the ladder also "became the metaphor for career, and career itself became the value that accompanied the bureaucratic form of hierarchical corporations" (Savickas & Savickas, 2019).

With this change, there was a shift away from the previous era in how guidance was conducted. Instead of focusing on individual differences, differences within one individual across time was considered. The shift towards the lifespan models implied observation to changes in people as they develop within their lifespan. As a person change, they may choose to move to a better fitting job or to another job and this sequence of positions was coined as *career* for sociologists. A career was representative of all the positions that an individual occupies from school until retirement.

The vocational guidance counselors of the previous era were criticized by Ginzberg et al. (1952) “for not having a theory and merely using a statistical technique for matching abilities and interests to occupational requirements and routines” (Savickas & Savickas, 2019). Two major theories, by Holland and Super, were developed following the criticism. Holland (1959)‘s theory transformed the psychology of individual differences focused on traits to a theory focused on types. Holland’s six types (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional – RIASEC) each group a set of related interests, values, and abilities. A match between the individual and the environment can be assessed based on how closely the type of vocational personality and type of work environment resembles.

As for Super (1953)‘s approach, the focus wasn’t on finding an occupational fit but rather on developing someone’s career across their lifespan. His developmental methods for career counseling were based on humanistic philosophy and a lifespan model. These methods are focused on how to make decisions rather than focusing on which occupation to choose. In other words, the goal isn’t to find a fit of occupation, but to develop careers across the lifespan of an individual which consists of orienting people to vocational development tasks and how to master them. Super’s theory developmental methods for career counseling were crafted to complement the methods of vocational guidance of choosing careers. Combining the new approaches to guidance, vocational education – where the content taught is based on how to do a certain job – becomes career development education – where the emphasis is on learning attitudes and competencies – which facilitated the process of career advancement and individual development. The approaches suggested by Super’s theory in conjunction with Rogers (1942)‘s client-centred counseling techniques led to vocational guidance counselors “who provide direction to the lost” to become career development counselors “who served as process consultants and empathic mirrors to the anxious” (Savickas & Savickas, 2019).

The conceptual model of individual differences psychology, or differential model, prominent during the industrial era, views vocational interests as traits that reside within the person which can be measured with interest inventories. On the other hand, the conceptual model of lifespan development, or lifespan model, views interests as a relation between a person and an environment. “From this perspective, interests are created by psychosocial interactions; they do not exist within the person as much as they emerge in interactions between the person and the situation. A change in social context may bring a change in vocational interests” (Savickas & Savickas, 2019).

By the end of the period of high modernity, there were three major theories of career development, each rooted in distinct psychological domains: Holland (1959)‘s based in individual differences psychology, Super (1957)‘s in lifespan psychology, and Lent et al. (1994)‘s on social learning theory,

2.1.1.4. Self-Construction in a Global Economy (2000-2050)

As we move away from the high modernity era in the twentieth century where occupations and corporations remained stable and move toward the post-modern era in the twenty-first century where the bureaucratic structures become unstable as hierarchical corporations reorganized and downsized, the meta-narratives that corporate institutions used to provide a sense of security and care for workers were no longer present. This change reflects the societal transformation going from industrialization and urbanization during the modernity towards digitalization and globalization in the post-modernity. The enabling of digital commerce with the advent of the Internet contributed to this transformation which shifted the main source of wealth creation from the manufacturing industry to the distribution and financing industries.

Since the world is changing rapidly due to economic globalization and diffusion of information technologies, companies needed to maintain flexibility by adopting the practices of lean production, downsizing, restructuring, consolidation, and flexible management. Jobs are no longer viewed as the best way to accomplish a work since today’s projects are more dynamic with process-based clusters of diverse tasks that require temporary and flexible employees to do the work. The employment contract in the twenty-first century is more of a transaction where the focus is on short-term efficiency compared the twentieth century where the relation is more based on long-term mutual loyalty (Savickas & Savickas, 2019). This new model of global production and

management is not an inevitable consequence of the information age, but a result of an economic and political choice made by governments and companies. The incentive towards productivity increases for short-term profitability was favoured in the process of transition to the new, informational economy (Castells, 2009).

The “gig economy” is the term referring to this increasingly common working arrangements that are precarious, with independent and temporary work (Duggan et al., 2020; Harvey et al., 2017). The “gig economy” also views career “not as a lifetime commitment to one employer but as selling services and a portfolio of skills to a series of employers who need projects completed” (Savickas & Savickas, 2019). Workers are no longer bounded by a single organization or grounded in the same job for three decades in this new employment market. This does not mean that careers in bureaucratic organizations no longer exist, they still do for many people, but the post-modern social structures make it difficult for individuals to stay with institutions and organizations over a long period of time.

One of the core characteristics of post-modern society is individualization where jobs are de-standardized and life course patterns are deinstitutionalized thus making life less predictable, less regulated, less stable, and less orderly. The individuals in the twenty-first century have now “the responsibility for understanding their own needs, determining their goals, designing their lives, managing their career, and the meaning of success” (Savickas & Savickas, 2019) where institutions provide less structure. In other words, the choice and shaping of life trajectories falls into the hands of the individual in an environment where work transience and instability make working lives unpredictable. More variety and opportunities are offered through work impermanence by taking on different jobs, but it comes with the burden of managing the growing complexity of their working lives (Ashford et al., 2018).

To support individuals in weighing the alternatives, coordinating outcomes, and repairing failures within a western society going through individualization of the life course, career counseling required a model that describes unique decisions rather than normative choices. The prescriptive methods of guiding based on the individual differences model of the industrial cities’ era and counseling based on the lifespan model of the corporate societies’ era are still relevant in many circumstances but are not adapted to the context of uncertain and changing occupational

structures of post-modernity. Workers in the post-modern societies require career counseling that responds to their feelings of anxiety caused by uncertainty as they adapt to multiple job changes.

While all workers experience emotions at work, scholars have suggested that independent workers of the gig economy experience a greater variety of emotions, more extreme emotions, and more frequent oscillations between emotions. These experiences of emotions (variety, intensity, and fluctuation) are respectively, but not uniquely, caused by financial stress, identity-related questions (which raise existential and interpersonal issues), unpredictability of working lives (Ashford et al., 2018; Petriglieri et al., 2018). Specifically, when it comes to identity challenges due to transience and career path uncertainty, workers' identities are more complex than it is typically for workers in traditional organizational roles (Caza et al., 2018). "Fewer and fewer people today can use a simple declaration such as 'I'm a banker' to fully capture and express their work identity, especially over the course of their careers" (Ashford et al., 2018).

Saying "I'm a banker" answers the twentieth century question of "What you want to be?" but is an incomplete response for the twenty-first century question of "How do you want to be?". To answer the latter question, counselors first adopted a social constructionist epistemology (Young & Collin, 2004) to conceive a career counseling model which is used to develop a life-design model (Savickas et al., 2009). Sensemaking is a core element of life-design counseling since it clarifies life purpose, cultivates intentionality and commitment to self. In an unstable, uncertain, risky liquid society, many people must answer for themselves the questions of "How shall I live?" and "How should I design my life to achieve my aspirations?" and it requires them to commit to their identity and own projects rather than to organizational careers (Savickas, 2015). In other words, workers do not choose an occupation at the end of schooling and then develop a career in a stable medium for 30 years, they must develop and use meta-competencies of identity and adaptability to construct their life.

On top of putting an emphasis on identity and adaptability, "the life-design model offers a new metaphor of career as story, rather than career as path. In this model, career is the story that people tell about their work lives. The autobiographical narrative provides a stabilizing meaning for internal guidance and self-direction during times of transition" (Savickas & Savickas, 2019):

“Career constructing methods assume that people use stories to organise their lives, shape their identities, and make sense of their problems. Clients enter counseling with a story to tell about some transition. The stories people tell have a way of taking care of them. By holding those stories in the relationship, counselors enable clients to reflect on their lives. Dwelling in their own stories often destabilises and deconstructs old ideas that block decision making and usually enables an awareness that prompts a choice. As clients give voice to their stories, they hear what they already know and find the answers which they seek. From their own knowing, clients take a new perspective that enables them to reconstruct their stories to define who they are, set priorities, clarify choices, articulate intentions, devise a plan, and take agentic action in pursuit of a life that they want to live (Savickas 2016)” (Savickas & Savickas, 2019).

To complement to this notion of shaping identity and making sense of self through career constructions, Savickas (2008) mentions that the :

[s]elf for the 21st century is neither character nor personality, it is identity. As a relational term, identity includes how we identify ourselves to others and how others recognise us. Identity is a view of self conceptualised as an emergent quality that is narrated by language, historically situated, socially constituted, and culturally shaped. It does not unfold from within; instead, identity is constructed. The identity view of career sees an individual’s work life as a story, one that carries meaning.

This quote was only found in the previous edition of the “International handbook of career guidance” book where Savickas and Savickas (2019)‘s article “A History Of Career Counseling” (referenced in this section of the thesis), but under the title of “Helping People Choose Jobs: A History Of The Guidance Profession”. I thought it was useful to bring this notion back as it made it clearer that identity can be deeply connected to someone’s career, as constructing their career implies constructing one’s sense of self as well. We can be identified and recognized by our work, but as previously mentioned, a job title is not adapted to the question of “How do you want to be?”

Counselors are aware that people do not have total freedom over constructing their career since there are life circumstances that are out of their control as well as normative boundaries and social constraints that influence their actions. Nonetheless, counselors help their clients find solutions and may differ in their approaches whether it is through the method of guiding, developing, or constructing.

2.1.1.5. Summary of the history of career counseling

The history of career counseling allows us to contextualize the benefits that each of the methods of counseling brought during an era and where they may fall short for other eras. As multiples important events such as technological innovations, war and conflicts, economic shifts, and social movements affect society, individuals are eventually impacted by the changes brought by these events. Specifically, when it comes to the attitudes and behaviours that individuals hold in regards to their career, these attitudes and behaviours change in response to many factors, including increasing life spans (which impacts work lives), changing family structures and the growing numbers of individuals seeking to fulfill needs for personal learning, development, and growth (Hall, 2004; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009).

To resolve the challenges introduced by societal transformations, career counselors developed new methods of helping individuals. The Table 2.1 summarizes the relationship between the eras and the methods of counseling that were developed.

Table 2.1: Career counseling philosophies, models, and methods during the economic eras

Economy	Philosophy	Model	Method
Agricultural (1850-1909)	Rationalist	Pedagogical	Mentoring
Industrial (1910-1949)	Empiricist	Individual differences	Guiding
Corporate (1950-1999)	Humanist	Lifespan	Developing
Global (2000-2050)	Constructionist	Life Design	Constructing

Source: Savickas and Savickas (2019)

2.1.2. Definition of a career

Even if people may conceptualize a career differently from one and another to varying degrees, covering the rationale for choosing a specific definition will provide a mental construct of what a career is and what people could generally think of when they speak of a career. This is why I am choosing a definition that is as broad as possible which covers as much as possible differing perspectives. Based on a literature review examining the nature of contemporary career, Sullivan and Baruch (2009) define a career as:

“an individual’s work-related and other relevant experiences, both inside and outside of organizations, that form a unique pattern over the individual’s life span.”

As vague as it is, this broad definition may be the most appropriate as it allows some degree of flexibility on its interpretation as our understanding of a career evolves over time as previously explored. It can encapsulate the conception of a career representing all the positions held by an individual between school and retirement in the corporate societies (1950-1999) as well as the clusters of diverse tasks held in temporary and flexible work arrangement in the global economy (2000-2050). Is it no longer necessarily defined in terms of employer-employee relationship. Regardless of the predictability of the sequence of events during someone's life span, the definition still holds. Here, an individual's life span does not necessarily refer to Super (1980)'s life span and life-stage model where a career develops by cycling through sequences of developmental stages. Life span is simply understood as the duration of an individual's life.

This broad definition highlights the multiple life-roles an individual can play and acknowledges the differences between individuals regarding their ascribed significance of each of their life-role and importance of work in their lives. For example, for some individuals, work may be located in the life role of homemaker or in volunteer activities (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2002). To be more precise, this broad definition of a career recognizes both these elements:

- **physical movements** such as movements between levels, jobs, employers, occupations, and industries
- **interpretation of the individual** such as their perception of career events (viewing job loss as failure instead of an opportunity for a new beginning), career alternatives (e.g., viewing limited vs. unlimited options), and outcomes (e.g., how one defines career success) (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009)

From this point of view, a career can be then seen as a linear and (more and more) as a non-linear, discontinuous path of work-related and relevant experiences that an individual engages in throughout their life. An individual's career, hence their work-related and relevant experiences, is influenced by many contextual factors, such as the national culture, the economy, and the political environment (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). These factors are constantly evolving which imply that the connotation of a career will evolve as well.

Personal factors also influence one's career trajectory, such as their relationships with others. For example, in a *dual-career couples* relationship that is composed of a man and a woman, where

both partners are committed to their professional occupations, this type of relationship can provide some relief to the expectation that the man must be self-defined in terms of occupational achievement and ability to economically provide for their families (Bird & Schnurman-Crook, 2005). This factor, amongst many other factors like increasing life spans, changing family structures (e.g., dual-career couples), change an individual's career attitudes and behaviours (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009) which in turn affects how they enact their career.

One confusing point about this concept is that *a career* can be interpreted as a synonym for *a profession, an occupation, or a vocation*, but its usage in a sentence somehow displays that *a career* is not an exact synonym to those words. Saying "I have a career in education" (or any other field) sounds more familiar than saying "My career is professor", and saying "My occupation is professor/I am a professor" vs. "I have an occupation in education". These terms, particularly *vocation* and *career*, may also have a somewhat unique connotation as we can sense in those statements. In recent times, *vocation* has been associated with vocational/technical education as opposed to jobs that require higher education. As for *career*, the term holds a more contemporary feel and is more commonly used in popular discourse. Sometimes, *careers* can be subjectively understood as a concept that involves higher education, but it does not necessarily imply prestigious work with favourable conditions and pay (Brown & Lent, 2020b). In this situation when *a career* is interpreted as something related to the professional life, it carries the meaning of a collection of multiple professions or jobs, rather than a single profession or job. If a context uses the expression "to change careers", it can imply that a career is a collection of multiple professions within a job family (e.g.: going from a career in engineering to a career in education).

Going back to our chosen definition, *a career* is more than just a collection of professional jobs (with or without higher education). Any work-related and relevant experience can be accounted for in its interpretation. It does not mean that the other usages of *a career* are inaccurate, but when using the term *career*, it may be more common to see it paired with other words which results in word combinations like *career path, career development, career in (a particular field)*, etc., compared to *profession* or *occupation* where they are used as a standalone term. Those additional terms allow to specify which part of the career is being discussed. These *career* word combinations hold additional meanings. Specifically, *career development* can be seen as:

“a process that encompasses much of the lifespan—one that begins in childhood (and includes the formal and informal experiences that give rise to talents, interests, values, and knowledge of the world of work); continues into adulthood via the progression of one’s career behaviour (e.g., entry into and adjustment to work over time); and may culminate with the transition into, and adjustment to, retirement.” (Brown & Lent, 2020b))

While *career* can be partly understood as specific instances of work-related experiences and events over an individual’s life span, *career development* can be then visualized as how those instances are being linked together depending on the time span over which those links are evaluated. “This concept refers to the lifelong psychological and behavioural processes as well as contextual influences shaping one’s career” (Niles & Karajic, 2008). The overall process “involves the individual’s creation of a career pattern, decision-making style, integration of life roles, values expression, and life-role self-concepts” (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2002). It is also designed to capture the dynamic, changing nature of career or work behaviour which can incorporate *career choice* at times and exclude it at other times. A *career choice* can be seen as the process of selecting and entering a particular career path while *career development* refers to the experience before, during and after career choice (Brown & Lent, 2020b).

To reduce further confusions introduced by evoking newer concepts without providing any proper definition for them, here are some useful distinctions between *job*, *career*, *work*, and *vocation*. The definitions that are going to be provided below represents only a contained view the broader concept of *a career* previously provided by Sullivan and Baruch (2009) as it seems to imply mostly professional type of work that required some sort of training or education. In this contained view, *work* refers to:

“the domain of life in which people provide services or create goods, typically (though not always) on a paid basis. It can also refer to the specific activities that one performs for pay or on a volunteer basis. In most societies, work is associated with the period of life after formal schooling (although some students engage in work as well as academic roles) and before retirement (which may or may not involve disengagement from paid work)” (Brown & Lent, 2020b).

A *job* is rather:

“a specific work position held over a defined period of time” (Brown & Lent, 2020b).

Combining these two clarifications on *work* and *job*, this other definition of a *career* (more commonly used in popular discourse compared to a *vocation*), in this contained view, is often used by vocational psychologists to refer to:

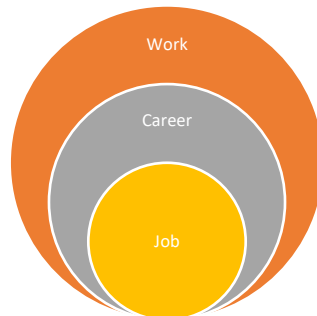
“a sequence, or collection, of jobs one has held over the course of one’s work life. In this sense, people may hold different jobs over the course of a single career” (Brown & Lent, 2020b).

Meanwhile, a *vocation* (sometimes viewed as an antiquated term) has been, in more recent times, associated with vocational/technical education instead of the academic track. A *vocation* is sometimes used to refer to:

“[a] job[] that do not require higher education” (Brown & Lent, 2020b).

Those definitions offer a more contained view as they seem to refer mainly to the type of work where an output of products or services is expected during a specific period of life rather than any work-related and other relevant experiences regardless of the timeframe. Nonetheless, this contained view makes it easier to grasp the relationship between the concepts evoked such as *job*, *career*, *work*, and *vocation*.

Figure 2.1: Relationship between job, career, and work



Suffice to say that the notion of a *career* remains ambiguous since there are multiple interpretations possible on a societal and individual level and “there is no agreement among scholars on a common definition of career” (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). In this thesis, based on the definition of a career provided initially where “an individual’s work-related and other relevant experiences, both inside and outside of organizations, that form a unique pattern over the individual’s life span.” (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009) – a definition similar to one suggested by Arthur (2019) in a Forbes article where a career is “the evolving sequence of your work experiences over time” –, it is possible to compare a career to what is understood as a *career path/trajectory*. The

term *career path/trajectory* becomes a tautology¹ since a *career* is already a pattern of experiences. Under that definition, an individual can only have a singular career (path) throughout their life, but it is still important to take into consideration the individual's interpretation and the context (e.g., in a western society) in which the term *career* is being used.

2.1.3. Connotations and objections to the use of the term “career”

Work is considered as the most inclusive way to refer to the subject of career development as it may carry less cultural baggage compared to other terms such as *career*. When the latter term is used as a synonym of *profession*, some writers find its usage as objectionable as it implies higher-status work that required more education. With higher-status work generally comes greater prestige, work conditions and pay. These writers argue that it signifies having the privilege to make a choice of a career and that not everyone who works has a subjective sense of career (Brown & Lent, 2020b).

There are concerns with classism related to what is considered as a career, but even those who hold a work position that is not viewed as a career may even agree that they do indeed not have one. What could be more relevant to certain individuals is to just have a stable pay to provide for their family. Wondering if their work qualifies as a career or is meaningful in and of itself is not so much a priority. Then follows the question of whether unpaid labour is considered work which is a topic on its own.

A *career* does not necessarily imply a higher-status work or prestige, but it does carry some connotations due to the literature associated with it. Most professionals in the field of career development and counseling made the compromise of using the term *career* until an alternative term meets with universal acceptance (Brown & Lent, 2020b). In this case, it would be relevant to be aware of the controversy around this topic and to try to see from which perspective the term *career* is tainted by when someone uses it.

¹ The linguistics version of the definition of tautology: using the same words to say the same thing twice

2.2. Career transition or career change

Based on the preferred definition in this thesis, if one can only have a single career throughout their life, how is it possible to change career? In this case, the interpretation will rely on the context provided by the writer or speaker, meaning that their definition of a career may vary as well as what it means to change. Instead of *career change*, *career transition* can be used instead to refer to changes in one's career as *changing careers (to change careers)* will equate more to a specific type of career transition as we will see. The plural form that the expression takes in the general discourse also implies, in that particular instance, going to one class of professions to another class of professions.

Change is “the situation where something becomes different” (*Antidote bilingual*, 2022) and *transition* is “the process of changing from one state or condition to another” (*Antidote bilingual*, 2022). Both terms imply that something isn't the same as before, so it seems appropriate to use them interchangeably. At the same time, a *transition* refers within its definition the change itself suggesting that it is broader than the change (e.g., what comes before, during, after the change event). Combining these definitions and applying them to the notion of a career, a *career change* and a *career transition* could both hold the same meaning of the process of change within a career as these concepts relate to one another (i.e., there is a career change event within the process of a career transition and a career transition is happening for the career change to occur). At the same time, a *career change* can mean *to change careers* if an individual refers to a career as a class of professions. Using *career transition* leaves less place for ambiguity than *career change*.

Overall, these ambiguous interpretations demonstrate once again the need to acknowledge the individual's use of the notions of career within their discourse. To alleviate some confusion, I will rely on Louis (1980)'s definition of career transition as many articles cite her proposed typology of type of career transitions. Having a typology of career transitions will serve as a framework for recognizing the diverse interpretative repertoires (see chapter 5.2) individuals may employ when engaging in discussions about the topic. It will also serve as a guide to conceptualize different aspects to be considered when speaking about a transition towards the SSE.

2.2.1. Definition of a career transition

Louis (1980) defined the term *career* as “a sequence of role-related experiences accumulated over time” which is comparable to the definition previously chosen in this thesis. Her use of the term *career* may refer to a work or nonwork role. Here, a role refers to traditionally only occupational or professional roles (e.g., doctor, lawyer), but it now expands to other work and central life roles (e.g., secretary, farmer, housewife, peace-corp volunteer). While her definition of career includes nonwork roles, her following discussion on career transition focuses on work roles.

In addition to the work or nonwork attribute of a role, both objective and subjective elements of roles are also important to be considered in the understanding of a career. An objective element is referred to changes that are publicly noticeable and knowable, and are often knowable in advance (i.e., at the time the transitioner accepts a new position). Examples of noticeable changes are the title, the organizational affiliation, the office address, co-workers, supervisors. Then, other differences are subjective in nature, meaning they are personally noticed rather than publicly (Louis, 1980).

Following the work vs. nonwork attribute and the objective vs. subjective elements of a career, as well as the notion of a career that forms a unique pattern of experiences over the individual’s life span, a career transition can be defined as:

“the period during which an individual is either changing roles (taking on a different objective role) or changing orientation to a role already held (altering a subjective state).” (Louis, 1980)

To illustrate this definition, the case of an individual switching company for the same position could be said to have a career transition since there is an objective change of location. It doesn’t imply only a change of a class of profession. If no changes in objective element take place, but there is an altering state in their attitude, values, needs, aspirations, self-assessments, and/or self-concept (subjective aspects) toward their role, the situation would still be qualified as a career transition. It then becomes important to identify the differences between the states of the old and new role or situation. The adaptation period will depend on the level of familiarity in the new context.

2.2.2. Types of career transitions

Louis (1980) identified two major categories of transitions: *interrole* and *intrarole*. An interrole transition imply that a new and different role is taken. There are fives types of interrole transitions:

1. Entering or reinterring a labour pool (entry/re-entry)
2. Taking on a different role or responsibility within the same organization (intracompany)
3. Moving from one organization to another (intercompany)
4. Changing profession or occupational specialization (interprofession)
5. Leaving a labour pool (exit)

(1) *Entering or reinterring a labour pool* implies a change of roles. Examples of this transition includes a college graduate getting hired at an organization for the first time as a full-time employee and a housewife or househusband returning to work after raising a child. An example of nonwork role is a person marrying and taking the role of spouse for the first time. (2) *Taking on a different role or responsibility within the same organization* could be moving from one department or division to another or even going from a technical role to a managerial role in the same department. (3) *Moving from one organization to another* represents an *intercompany transition*. (4) *Changing profession or occupational specialization* is defined as *interprofession transition*. Examples of interprofession transitions are when a dentist decides to go into law, a corporate employee leaves their job to become an entrepreneur, or someone who leaves the business world to become a government official. (5) *Leaving a labour pool*, also referred to as the *exit transition*, takes multiple forms. It may be a leave of absence, a brief planned exit for a specified and finite duration, a long-term withdrawal for an indeterminate duration (to raise a child for example), an involuntary unemployment, or a retirement.

Interrole transition differs from intrarole transition in an important way according to Louis (1980). An individual living an interrole transition is more likely to be aware of the change happening compared to an intrarole transition where the individual may not have the conscious awareness of the change occurring. One of the reasons is that an intrarole transition implies that a new and different orientation to an old role is taken. Louis (1980) identified four types of intrarole transitions:

1. Intrarole adjustment

2. Extrarole adjustment
3. Role/career-stage transition
4. Life-stage transition

(1) *Intrarole adjustment* is an adjustment in orientation to a role that an individual makes in response to the accumulation of experiences within the same role. An example would be a replacement of enthusiasm and commitment by complacency as new recruits encounters the realities of the corporate life. Differences in expectations lead to changes in attitudes. (2) *Extrarole adjustment* reflects the potential interaction and interdependence between multiple life roles where a change in life role can lead to an adjustment to another role. For example, if someone has a change in their family role, it may lead to an adjustment to their work role such as welcoming a newborn into their life. (3) *Role/career-stage transition* is in part based on Super (1957)'s staged model of organizational career where an individual progresses on an expected career cycle. These transitions may be predictable, or plannable, but they often occur without the individual's conscious effort or awareness. The career-stage transition, in comparison to the intracompany transition, represents a major passage through the career cycle instead of minor changes through an official change in role and duties. It does not require an official change in the organizational role, and the changes are more diffuse, pervasive, gradual, and less conscious. (4) *Life-stage transition* is based on Erikson (1959)'s of the life cycle of a series of stages in psychosocial development that an individual passes throughout their life. Different issues are present at different life stages which guide individuals' orientation to their lifespace and tasks. For example, Erikson suggests that individuals at mid or late adulthood may feel like they have accomplished enough in their life work and may wish to contribute by helping other by taking a senior guiding responsibility.

2.2.2.1. The difficulty to categorize types of transitions

Although there have been calls to revisit and update Louis (1980)'s typology of career transitions due to the latest trends in the gig economy such as transition from full-time to part-time work, from full-time to freelancing (Mussagulova et al., 2023; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2008), her definition still remains relevant as going from full-time employment to freelancing can be classified as a change of role and going from full-time employment to part-time employment can

be considered as a change of orientation to a role. Whether changing the number of work hours is an objective or subjective aspect of the role, the answer isn't clear, but if this change is a result of an extrarole change, such as a becoming a parent and wanting to spend more time with their newborn, the reduction of work hours is most likely an outcome of the situation. Reduction of work hours may not be the effect of becoming a parent, although not an impossible consequence.

One point of contention could be the ambiguity to categorize a career transition within Louis (1980)'s typology. If an individual shift from a technical role to a managerial role, in her typology, it is categorized as an intracompany transition, but it could be argued that it is also a change in profession. To illustrate the point, if an individual has a degree in computer science who is working as a software developer in their current role, and then becomes a project manager, a different skillset will be required to exercise their new position. On the other hand, this position could also be obtained by another individual with a bachelor's in management. There is an overlap of skills required between those two degrees for the new work role, but the term *manager* relates more to the field of management than the field of computer science. This interpretation allows us to argue that this career transition can also be classified as an interprofession transition.

Other scholars have also provide an understanding of different types of transitions. Schlossberg (2011) categorized the type of transitions as follows:

- Anticipated transitions: major expected life events (e.g., graduating from high school or college, marrying, becoming a parent, starting a first job, changing careers, retiring)
- Unanticipated transitions: unexpected events that are often-disruptive (e.g., major surgery, serious car accident or illness, surprise promotion, factory closing)
- Non-event transitions: expected events that fail to occur (e.g., not getting married, not receiving the promotion expected, not being able to afford to retire)

Whether transitions are events or non-events, anticipated or unanticipated, Schlossberg (2011) describes them as an experience that alters our lives (our roles, relationships, routines, and assumptions). She explains that transitions such as beginning a first job, changing jobs, taking an early retirement all change a person's life. Becoming a new worker can affect, for instance, a person's assumptions about self and life; retiring can also have the same effect. To what extent and in what ways are the critical questions to be asking. These descriptions and explanations are

similar to Louis (1980)'s definition of a career transition where it implies taking on different objective roles or altering a subjective state occurs.

2.2.3. Summary on career transitions

A career transition can be understood as a period where a change occurs to a work or nonwork role of an individual. It can be related to a change of role (objective element) or a change of orientation to a role (subjective element). A change of role implies publicly known information such as the title or the company, while change of orientation implies an altering state in their attitude, value, needs, aspirations, self-assessments, and/or self-concept towards their role.

When attempting to classify different types of career transitions, some events and non-events are not as obvious to classify due to the changing work environment.

Even if Louis (1980)'s typology isn't an undisputable classification of career transitions, it provides different angles of observation on career transitions which are accompanied by questions that may be relevant to ask. Such questions could be the following: what does it imply when the person is changing organisation and/or changing profession, what are adjustments they did to their life roles, did their transition followed an expected career trajectory, was it anticipated or unanticipated? Inquiry can be made on one's roles, relationships, routines, and assumptions. The Table 2.2 summarizes Louis (1980)'s typology.

Table 2.2: Louis (1980)'s career transitions typology

Major categories of transitions	Types of transitions
Interrole transitions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Entry/re-entry 2. Intracompany 3. Intercompany 4. Interprofession 5. Exit
Intrarole transitions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intrarole adjustment 2. Extrarole adjustment 3. Role/career-stage transition 4. Life-stage transition

What seems to be missing from the conversation is the notion of time which is relevant for my thesis on career transition from the private for-profit sector towards the social and solidarity economy (SSE). This specific circumstance of transition can be a culmination of multiple types of

transitions depending on the context: interprofession (if new studies are required), intercompany, and extrarole (the role of a citizen in the global society taking more importance than the role of a worker). Where the notion of time comes into play is at what time is the individual narrating their transition. We can only talk about the past in the present moment, meaning that talking about a career transition at the time it is happening may not reflect the same story as talking about it a few years later. If an individual at a certain time quits their job without knowing what to do, this situation would simply be an exit of the labour pool for an undetermined duration. Few years later, that period may be referred to as a period for reflecting on themselves rather than a transition. This is why it is important to consider the moment of an individual's recollection of events, whether it is before, during or after a transition. Then, we open another can of worms when we want to define an end state of a transition, in other words, understand when a transition is considered as completed or successful.

3. Career Transition Towards the Social and Solidarity Economy

To better understand what the current research says about career transitions towards the social and solidarity economy (SSE), this chapter will begin by covering the literature on career transitions as a general topic of study. This general overview is important as the overall picture on that topic will provide the relevant perspectives that can be transposed into studies that are specifically analyzing the transition towards the SSE and guide me towards area that may require deeper exploration. For example, in a perspective that considers career transitions as predictable events, even if an existing paper has theorized a particular model to predict these transitions for contexts that are different from the context of transitioning towards the SSE, the learnings from that model can still fuel our research as it provides contextual understanding.

Afterward, I will review the literature for career transitions towards the SSE. A comparison between these areas of studies (career transitions as a general phenomenon vs. towards the SSE) will then be presented to provide a portrait of the state of knowledge of these studies, their gaps, and identify the relevance of certain directions for additional research. One reason for doing a literature review of this sort, even if epistemologically incompatible with the theoretical approach (based in social constructionism) that I am using for analyzing my data, is that the findings of the literature review can map out a contextual understanding of how one could approach and would understand the topic of career transitions. As these papers may rely on qualitative data, it means that the results are grounded in a joint perspective of the participants and the researchers. Researchers are conducting the interviews; thus, they may have an influence on what type of data they will be selecting. Then, the participants provide their input during the process of data collection; thus, they introduce their understanding of the studied topic. In short, this implies that the findings construct (or reconstructs) to some extent the interpretative repertoires (see chapter 5.2) individuals may rely on when making sense of their career transitions.

3.1. Main theories used to study and understand career transitions

Despite a great amount of knowledge on specific types of career transitions accumulated, Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021) observed that the literature remains fragmented. On top of it, since Louis (1980)'s influential article on types of career transitions covered in chapter 2.2 of this thesis, career attitudes and behaviours have greatly changed, and careers have become increasingly complex (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021).

The concern of the lack of a comprehensive assessment of the vast literature on career transitions as a general phenomenon was alleviated by Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021)'s analysis. The purpose of their paper was to examine the major theoretical perspectives that have been used to study career transitions. It allowed them to recognize emerging trends and research gaps, underscore novel contributions, and to finally recommend major avenues for future research on the topic.

Using an inductive approach, Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021)'s summarized 242 research publications on career transitions and established five major theoretical perspectives consisting of the following: *career stage*, *decision-making*, *adjustment*, *relational*, and *identity*. In their paper, these perspectives were presented as independent of each other for purposes of clarity of discussion, but they recognized the interdependencies among these perspectives and the importance of using a holistic approach when studying career transitions. How their paper differs from Louis (1980)'s, is that they examine the major theoretical perspectives that have been used to study career transitions rather than cataloguing the different types of career transitions.

I will mainly rely on their research to summarize what has been studied so far on career transitions as a general phenomenon as it condensed more knowledge that I would be able to accomplish within the scope of this thesis. Also, as their research concerns the general study of career transitions, I judged that it was appropriate for me to not look in detail about the intricacies of each of the specific types of transitions cited in their paper as they are not all relevant for this thesis. Nonetheless, their overview will provide enough information to have a better understanding of career transitions and identify potential gaps in studying career transitions. These understandings and knowledge gaps could be applied for the specific type of transition concerned by this thesis, which is the transition from the private for-profit sector towards the SSE.

3.1.1. Five theoretical perspectives on career transitions

A brief review of the five major theoretical perspectives by Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021) will be provided in this section. Those perspectives do not summarize every article referenced in the category, but the models and examples are representative and relevant to illustrate some key ideas. These studies can focus on one particular group of individuals in a particular context, which means that the findings are not universally applicable.

For theoretical reasons, since I will rely on a narrative career identities perspective, I am transposing these perspectives into interrogative form as it will bring forward the narrative inquiries these studies could be trying to answer.

3.1.1.1. Career stage perspective

The **career stage perspective** posits that career transitions are fairly predictable events. As an individual ages and moves from one period of development to another across their career, a transition occurs (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021).

Super (1957)'s career stage model is considered the most influential and widely used model amongst several other stage models (Hartung, 2013). In his model, he proposed that four major career transitions occur over adulthood as individuals address the developmental tasks associated with each career stage (Sullivan & Crocitto, 2007; Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021):

- 1) **Exploration:** Period of engaging in self-examination, schooling, and the study of different career options. A first major transition (school-to-work transition) occurs when individuals leave the exploration phase and enter the establishment stage.
- 2) **Establishment:** Period of becoming employed and finding a niche. In this stage, individuals typically seek upward mobility, either within or across organizations.
- 3) **Maintenance:** Period of holding on to one's position and updating skills. Individuals may continue to transition upward or may plateau.
- 4) **Disengagement:** Period of phasing into retirement. Individuals prepare for transitioning out of the labour force.

This linear progression may be interrupted in a process where the individual returns to the developmental tasks and concerns of an earlier career stage (Super et al., 1988). But since the release of the original paper, the linear progression may not hold for generations that are not part

of the Baby Boomer generation (Sullivan & Crocitto, 2007). Also, there is questioning about the generalizability of Super's theory towards women's career development as the model was developed with male samples. Although women progressed through similar periods of stability and transitions as men, they tended to have "split dreams" by the age of 30, where they changed their focus from either career to family or vice versa (Roberts & Newton, 1987) (Sullivan, 1999). Furthermore, an individual's decision to transition is dependent on structural factors (e.g., labour market, organizational policies and practices, etc.) (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021). Cultural norms can shape the life role a person is taking such as being a mother by a certain age.

Another model suggested by Hall and Mirvis (1995) explains that individuals go through a series of mini-stages of exploration-trial-mastery-exit throughout their career. These mini-stages are driven by an individual's desire to master new competencies as they transition into different roles, organizations, and work environments. A new cycle of mini-stage cycle of learning may be triggered by external or internal changes, such as the introduction of new technologies to complete one's job, or a personal desire for self-development. While the foundation of Super's theory relies on the stages of development, Halls and Mirvis based themselves off the relationship between physical mobility and learning.

If we are to frame this perspective into a main question that may elicit an individual to elaborate on this topic, it would imply asking *when* does a transition occur for an individual. This perspective would be relevant in identifying temporal elements individuals may use to describe and justify their transition. Inevitably, we would have to ask *why* that transition occurred at that particular moment of their life to deepen the understanding of the career change. The identities associated to (a) life-role(s) the individual is assuming at the moment of transition could also be relevant to answering the question.

3.1.1.2. Decision-making perspective

The **decision-making perspective** focuses on determining what factors influences the decision-making process of individuals faced with the opportunity to make a career transition (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021). Within this description, we can already observe that the perspective is concerned with the question pertaining to *what* such as "what caused them to change", "what did they have to evaluate before transitioning". Feelings of job insecurity may be part of the cause

of people's decisions to engage in any type of career transition. To obtain answers of the causes for making a career transition, it is also possible to ask *why* the person decided to change.

For example, a study on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover detailed how individuals use a rational decision-making to evaluate the expected utility of job search, the cost of quitting, and how job alternatives compare to the current job (Mobley, 1977). More recent research integrated the occurrence of chance events (e.g., unexpected job offer, a “values and goals” conflict after an employing firm's acquisition by another company) and emotions into the process of making decision (e.g., feeling discarded by their firm, having an epiphany that changed their priorities from work to family (Vough et al., 2015)) (Kindsiko & Baruch, 2019; Singh & Greenhaus, 2004).

As previously mentioned, scholars asked “what makes individuals decide to make a career transition”, but there is an evolution in the research by turning towards the question of “what makes people decide to stay embedded in the current situation” (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021). There is a gap in the research as studies tend to focus on individual agency even if some models recognize the micro and macro factors of influence on the career transition decision-making process. This recognizes the possible interaction between agency and structure. To bridge the gap, future studies could consider the impact of, to name a few, organizational practices, and social norms (e.g., gender expectations).

3.1.1.3. Adjustment perspective

The **adjustment perspective** examines the adjustment individuals go through regarding their career transition. Scholars recognize that adjustment to a career transition is not a discrete event; it occurs in phases over time (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021).

Studies have investigated what factors influence the adjustment to a career transition as well as the strategies employed by individuals and organizations to enhance the adjustment process. Schlossberg (1981)'s model is an example of a well-known model that details three factors that influence adjustment during a transition: 1) the perception of the transition (e.g., positive or negative, internal or external cause), 2) the differences between the pre- and post-transition environment (e.g., degree of support, physical work setting), 3) characteristics of the individual

(e.g., demographics, value) influence adjustment. Other scholars have examined the adaptation strategies and organizational tactics that may be used to enhance employee adjustment. For example, Nicholson (1984) suggested that individuals engage in different strategies to adjust to a transition such as proactively changing the role to better match themselves or altering their frame of reference, values, or identity to better match the situation.

An individual narrating through their adaptation period would answer questions such as “what did they do to adjust to their new role”, “how did they adjust to the change”?

3.1.1.4. Relational perspective

The **relationship perspective** relies on the premise that career transitions are socially embedded (Arthur et al., 2016; Motulsky, 2010). The social embeddedness is not just about people’s relationships, but in a broader sense, their connections to self, others, and society (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021). The perspective is concerned with *whom* the individual knows or is surrounded by, and then, for example, some studies delve deeper into the question of how individuals proactively develop and maintain social networks for the purpose of work or career benefits, including the facilitation of career transition (Forret, 2018).

Studies have also examined how various people from an individual’s life (work and non-work domain) influence their decisions about, engagement in, and adjustment to, career transitions. For example, how individuals make decisions about which occupation to enter, what organization to join through their observations of (and their interactions with) others has been studied (Higgins, 2001). There are more sources of influences on worker’s career transitions with increased mobility as they are working with diverse colleagues of different races, generations, religions, cultures, and gender identities.

3.1.1.5. Identity perspective

The **identity perspective** focuses on the evolving narrative of an individual about who they are, how they feel, and how they act (McAdams, 2008; McAdams & McLean, 2013) may trigger a career transition. But since work is a major source of identification for many individuals (Arvey et al., 2004), there is also a focus on the impact of career transitions on an individual’s identity.

What this means is that identity changes can trigger career transitions and career transitions may also trigger changes in an individual's identity (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021).

Studies suggested explanatory models to explain the association between the process of identity development and career transitions (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Markowska et al., 2015). For example, a model based on a study on medical resident presents the identity customization process where they shaped their identity to fit the work due to a mismatch between what they did on the job and who they were (Pratt et al., 2006). Using insights from people who changed careers, there is also a process where individuals tested out different "alternative selves" not just a means of exploring possibilities, but to create new selves. "It is a method of inquiry, one we can use to confirm or disconfirm our hunches about what options are feasible or appealing. Experiments allow us to flirt with our possible selves" (Ibarra, 2003). Another study proposed a three-phase model where the process of career transition involved the detachment from the old sense of self, the resolution of uncertainties, and the reinvention of a new sense of self (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014).

Scholars widely recognize that individuals have multiple identities (Ramarajan, 2014; Welbourne & Paterson, 2017), but in research, only one identity is typically examined for career transitions. These scholars identified a gap in knowledge regarding if just a few identities act to influence an individual's career transition process or multiple identities are involved (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021).

3.1.2. Summary of the five theoretical perspectives

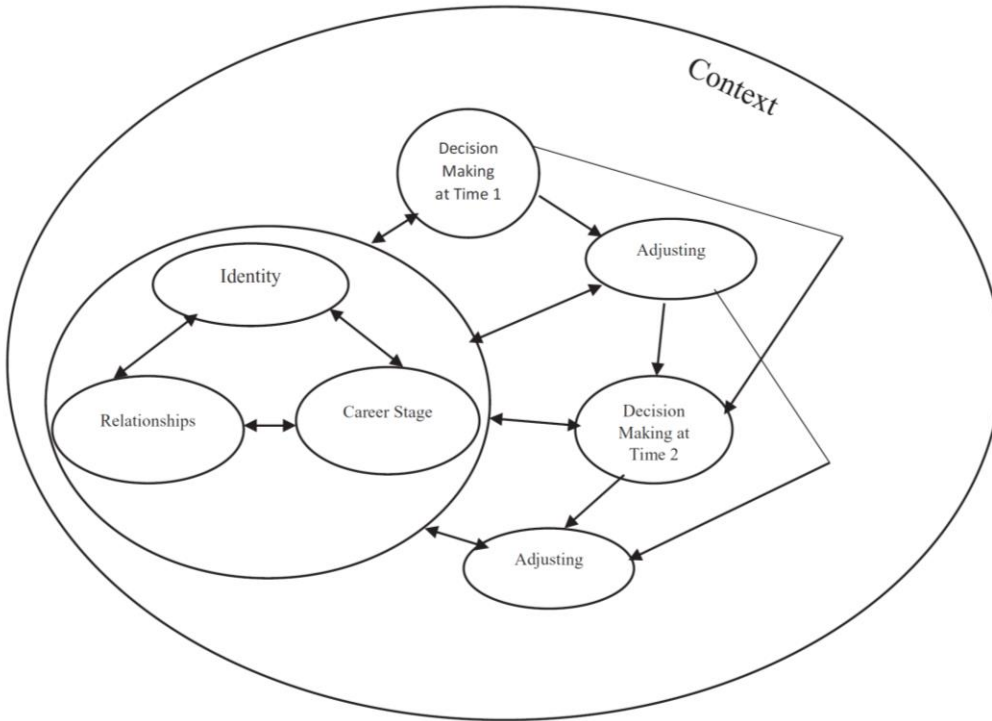
The Table 3.1 summarizes the five theoretical perspectives of Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021). The major premise is copied exactly from the scholar's table, but I have also added the "main interrogative markers" (who, what, when, where, why and how) associated to the perspective to provide a sense of overview of the kind of question it is trying to answer. These markers are also used in storytelling (5W and 1H) which is why I decided to include them to establish a parallel of how one would introduce a major premise within their narration of their career transition.

Table 3.1: Summary of the five theoretical perspectives

Perspectives	Major premise	Main interrogative markers
Career stage	“Career transitions are fairly predictable events”	When
Decision-making	“Examination of factors that influence people’s career transition decisions”	What/Why
Adjustment	“Individuals adjust to career transitions in phases”	What/How
Relational	“Career transitions are socially embedded”	Who
Identity	“Identity changes may trigger career transitions and vice versa”	Who

In the table above, the interrogative marker “*where*” is not present, but it is not because it has been neglected from the research on career transition. The *context* is representative of the “location” of the speaker in a broader sense, not only pertaining to the spatial location, but also taking the meaning of the historical and cultural location. For further clarification, if we look at Figure 3.1, we can see that the *context* is encompassing all the other perspectives. That figure, suggested by Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021) for future research, illustrates a holistic approach that considers career transitions over time. Only two decision points were shown for *Person Z* (“Decision Making” at Time 1 and 2, and “Adjusting”). At each of these times, there is an influence of identity, career stage, and relationship on the decision-making and vice versa.

Figure 3.1: Example of cycles of career transition process for Person Z



Source: Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021)

3.1.3. The centrality of identity within the five theoretical perspectives on career transitions

As I have observed, it is not a surprise that a central element of the five theoretical perspectives is the element of identity. In the career stage perspective, assuming a different life role, such as becoming a parent, implies a change in identity. For the decision-making perspective, there must be a consideration of the micro and macro influences and the social norms (e.g., gender expectations) have been cited, which imply the participation of the identity. The same goes for the adjustment perspective when scholars take into consideration the influence of the characteristics of the individual on their transition. Then, the relational perspective could involve the interaction of the individuals with others, which is an interaction of identities. Finally, the identity perspective speaks for itself. How this perspective has been presented by using the terminology of identities is in adequation with the concerns of the theoretical frameworks of discursive psychology (DP) and critical discursive psychology (CDP) (see chapter 5).

Due to the centrality of identity for the research in career transitions in each of the theoretical perspectives, I use this observation as further evidence to suggest that it is an element that needs to be taken into consideration for my study. The area for future studies on the interplay among different identities that may influence the career transition processes is also promising (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021).

3.1.4. Limitation of the five theoretical perspectives

When trying to paint a portrait of a type of career transition, mapping out the process using the five theoretical perspectives makes it quite messy. This is partly due to the interdependence between these perspectives. Most obvious is the perspective of identity that is present within all the other perspectives. For example, in a paper that fits under the perspective of decision-making, may select certain variables pertaining to an individual's identity and in this situation, we are evaluating the influence between certain elements of their identities and an aspect of their decision-making capacity; unlinking the identity element and decision-making aspect defeats the purpose of Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021)'s paper as they mentioned the interdependence between these perspectives. This suggests an existence of relationship between these variables. But then, if we map out the process, such as the example of Figure 3.1, maybe we could rather break down

some of these elements into the context. Doing so would end up having duplicated variables as they could be both considered as a contextual element, or a variable used to evaluate its influence on an outcome.

Furthermore, as these studies rely on a positivist philosophy, the findings could be of limited use in a study based on social constructionism. Nonetheless, as I explained, how I interpret my data and my conception of reality is grounded in positivist theories which cannot be ignored. We can see these theories as shaping our discourse.

3.2. Integrative understanding of career transitions across lifespan

Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021)'s literature review identified the main theoretical perspectives that have been used to study career transitions, but the use of these theories across many of the studies referenced by their article is fragmented and inconsistent. It makes it difficult to compare and theorize across career transition types. It is likely that, despite each transition being unique, they share considerable similarities, so a lack of consistency makes it hard for research to learn from each other and slows knowledge expansion and dissemination (Akkermans et al., 2024).

Many studies also dominantly relied on contextual factors – such as parental support, parental socio-economic status, support (from family, organizations, supervisors, coworkers), existing family obligations, and social capital – as static predictors of positive transition outcomes (life satisfaction, reemployment quality, employment status). Personality² disposition as predictors of transition processes and outcomes such as proactive personality, big five dimensions, self-efficacy beliefs, and self-esteem were also studied but their effects on career transitions outcomes were much less straightforward (Akkermans et al., 2024).

While static predictors are usually focused on the individual's relatively stable and non-malleable characteristics, the overemphasis on these predictors means that other personal factors are underrepresented in the literature. Few studies focused on the actions and behaviours (dynamic behavioural predictors) of the individual that prepare them for the transitions and to

² In discourse analysis, the term “identity” is preferred as we will explore in chapter 5.1.

manage it. An example of study of dynamic behavioural predictor would be the correlation between the job search behaviour intensity and quality and beneficial transition outcomes (reemployment opportunities, job satisfaction, and reemployment) (Akkermans et al., 2024).

Another issue pertaining to the transition outcomes is the underdevelopment of the examination of moderating variables, such as socio-demographic variable (e.g., gender), contextual variables (e.g., social support), other personal dispositions and traits variables (e.g., conscientiousness, extraversion), that could affect career transitions. The plurality of examined moderators makes it hard to have some sort of generalizations about essential boundary conditions determining whether and how specific antecedents can predict career transition outcomes (Akkermans et al., 2024).

Using a self-regulation framework, Akkermans et al. (2024) propose a model that organizes all significant factors they found in their literature to allow for a more consistent and integrative theorizing on career transitions. Their model presented at Figure 3.2 seems to fix the issues of fragmentation and inconsistency by relying solely on the five theoretical perspectives of Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021) as it segments better the different variables and boundaries found across the timeline of a career transition. In general, a self-regulation framework aims to understand “how individuals allocate volitional, cognitive, and affective resources across multiple tasks” (Lord et al., 2010). Individual sets goals and keep track of their progress towards the goals in order to adapt their behaviours or cognition if there is a discrepancy between a goal and the current state (Karoly, 1993). A negative feedback loop should also be considered when mapping out the significant factors.

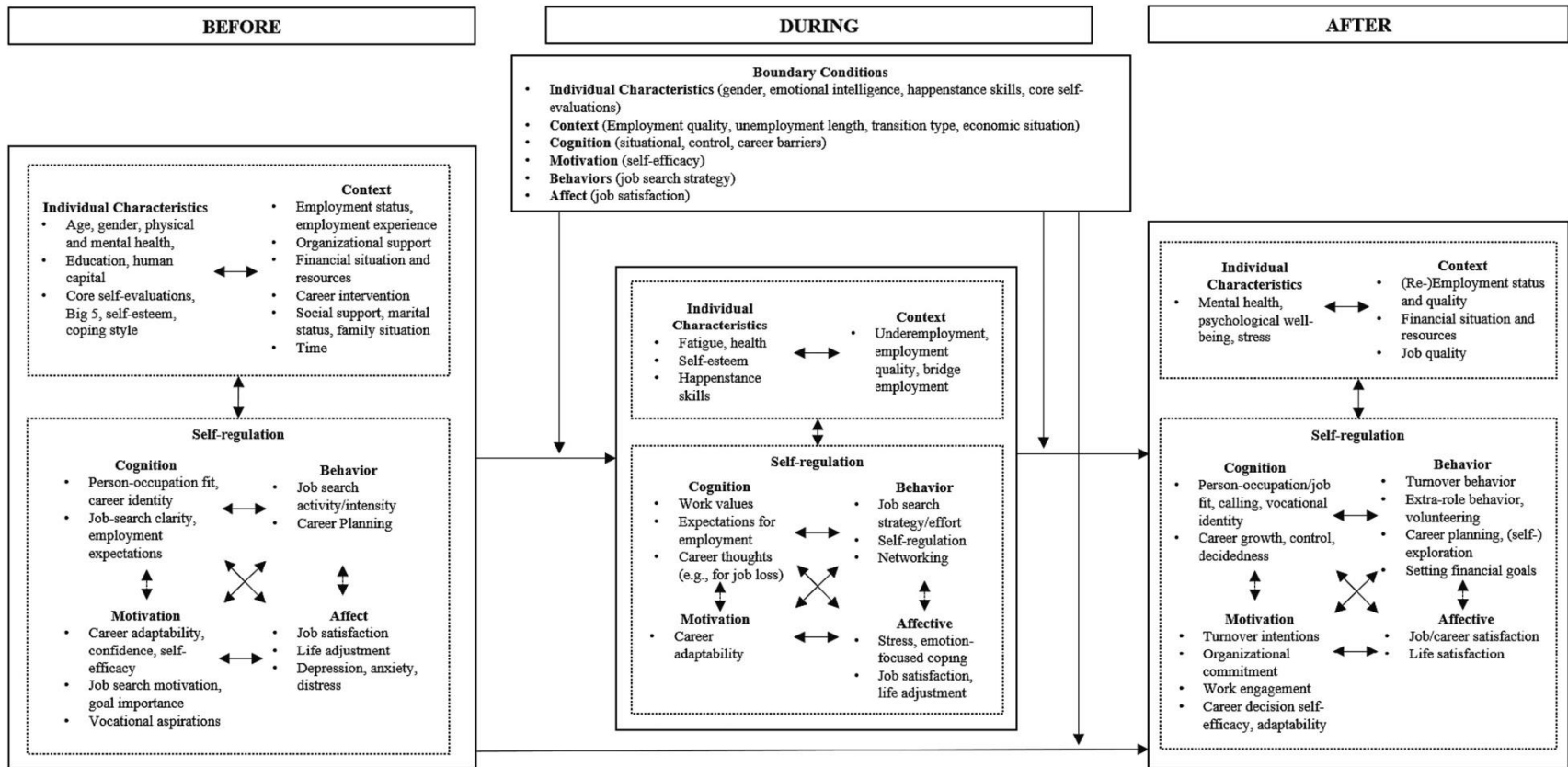
The Figure 3.2 representing Akkermans et al. (2024)‘s self-regulating model is separated into three phases: before, during, and after phases. The “before” phase (i.e., pre-transition antecedents) represents “the time when the individual is still in their ‘old’ employment status (e.g., in school, current employment) and includes the preparatory transition self-regulation, such as mapping the environment for resources for goal attainment or forming more specific action plans in anticipation of moving to a ‘new’ desired employment status (e.g., in first job, new employment, full retirement)” (Akkermans et al., 2024). The “during” phase (i.e., mechanism) “entails the self-regulatory factors that individuals engage in to attain their desired career goals (e.g., success in the

future employment status) and factors that influence this process” (Akkermans et al., 2024). In that mediating phase, the individual is no longer in the ‘old’ employment status but has not yet (fully) arrived in the ‘new’ desired status. Finally, the “after” phase (i.e., post-transition outcomes) concerns the “settling into and learning the new role(s) and adjusting to the new context after attaining the ‘new’ desired employment status” (Akkermans et al., 2024). The three phases are not always clearly empirically distinguishable, but what this model brings to light is the temporality when studying career transitions, an important characteristic of narration as we will see in chapter 4.

Then, a range of variables are at the core of the self-regulation process: cognition, motivation, affect, and behaviour. They are used to categorize the significant factors within each phase. “First, cognitive variables are metacognitive strategies of goal setting, planning, and monitoring to pursue goal attainment, as well as of strategizing about time and effort” (Akkermans et al., 2024). “Second, motivational variables direct individuals to pursue their goals in terms of goal type and content, motives, and interests” (Akkermans et al., 2024). “Third, affective variables, accompany goal setting and pursuit in terms of affect and emotions” (Akkermans et al., 2024). “Finally, behavioral variables are related to the action and effort individuals exert to pursue and direct toward attaining their goals” (Akkermans et al., 2024).

Overall, this model offers a starting point for unifying the theorization career transitions across the lifespan. As a reminder, when we explored the history of career transition, the life-design model, used by career counselor, holistically considers the individual across their lifespan when helping them construct their career. In a similar fashion, the self-regulating model also has a holistic approach that considers elements from the past, present, and future (the lifespan), to study career transitions. That model also allows researchers to use a common theoretical lens to study this topic and to customize research approaches across career transition types; it enables scholars to temporally locate their research within the three temporal phases and various self-regulation categories (Akkermans et al., 2024).

Figure 3.2: A self-regulation model of career transitions integrating effects across different transition types, categorized into the phases before, during, and after a career transition



Source: Akkermans et al. (2024)

3.3. Career transitions from the for-profit sector towards the SSE

In my research, I have found only four papers that addressed explicitly the topic of career transitions from the private for-profit sector towards the SSE. Three out of the four concerns the transitions towards the non-profit sector (that is part of the SSE) while the fourth one is framed around the discourse of SSE. This may not be an issue, but it is to note that the finding will be skewed towards the non-profit sector which may involve different dynamics at play. An example of a difference in contextual change is that a social business functions purely on a commercial basis unlike non-profits (Hussain et al., 2023) as in they rely on generating their own profit to continue operating. This means that when transitioning into a social enterprise, it could require less adaptation as the commercial logic of that business is similar to an individual's prior experience within the for-profit sector compared to a situation where they are transitioning into a non-profit organization. This will limit the applicability of the papers of this literature review on other types of organizations that belongs under the umbrella term of SSE. Nonetheless, there are still common factors to consider such as the motivations to transition and the social context leading up to those motivations.

3.3.1. Difficulty to define the for-profit sector and the SSE

Following the definition provided in the introduction that the SSE is an umbrella term that “encompasses a set of organizations whose activities are driven by societal objectives, values of solidarity, the primacy of people over capital and participative governance” (OECD, 2023) which can take the form of mutual associations, cooperatives, non-governmental organizations (NGO), social enterprises, etc. (Laville, 2015), the distinction between the for-profit sector and the SSE can become confusing. The reason being is that social enterprises generate profit, meaning that it is a for-profit enterprise. There is then an overlap between the private for-profit sector and the SSE. This means that the entities from the third sector (e.g., cooperatives, non-profit organizations, etc.) cannot be easily classified as neither belonging to the private nor the public sector (Defourny, 2001).

If we attempt to redefine as mutually exclusive categories, i.e., for-profit and non-profit, we may lose the aspect of economical and political empowerment. A non-profit may not have a mission participative governance. In both cases, the societal objectives and values of solidarity

may hold different meanings for different people and is subject to interpretation. This suggests that there will be gray areas when comparing the for-profit sector and the SSE. There are debates over the definition of the social and solidarity economy and it has implications on specific policy directions. Attempting to adopt a seemingly neutral ideological position towards achieving the common good becomes a terrain where different political visions are contested (Adam, 2018).

Based on a summary at the Table 3.2 of the terminological pluralism of the diverse theoretical approaches and historical trajectories of the SSE, I have judged that the SSE should take the form of the three concepts of solidarity economy, social economy, and the nonprofit sector.

Table 3.2: The three delineations of the SSE (the diverse theoretical approaches and historical trajectories of the SSE)

Solidarity Economy	Social Economy	Non-profit Sector
<p>Includes all economic activities which aim at the economic democratization on the basis of citizen participation. They involve a dual perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic because they attempt to create economic relations based on reciprocity while making use of resources from the market and welfare state redistribution and • Political because they attempt to create autonomous public spaces and open up discussion on both means and ends. 	<p>Includes all economic activities undertaken by enterprises, mainly cooperatives, associations and mutual societies, which adhere to the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing members of the community a service rather than generating profit • Independent management • Democratic decision-making, and • Priority given to persons and work over capital in the distribution of income. 	<p>Includes all nonprofit organizations with the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal entities, institutionalized to some meaningful extent, • Private, institutionally separate from government, • Non-profit-distributing, not returning profits generated to their owners or directors, • Self-governing, equipped to control their own activities, • Voluntary, i.e., involving some meaningful degree of voluntary participation.

Source: (Adam, 2018; Adam & Papatheodorou, 2010)

It follows that the for-profit sector as defined in this thesis is the sector that does not fit within the three concepts of the SSE as defined above.

3.3.2. What type of transition is the transition from the for-profit to SSE?

Using examples from the literature review on career transitions from the private for-profit sector towards the SSE, I observed a varying degree of events and changes involved with this type of career transition. If I apply Louis (1980)'s typology to categorize this transition, depending on the time scale that we are observing the process of career change, it makes it difficult to categorize it as there could be a mix of interrole and intrarole transition. For example, after changing priorities within their value system (intrarole – extrarole adjustment), an individual may then decide to change position within their company (interrole – intracompany) to realize that they are still

unsatisfied with their career which leads them to resign for an indeterminate time (interrole – exit), etc. Each of these events could refer to a particular study on career transition such as the sources of influences on career choices (e.g., beliefs, values, family, etc.), the adjustment when changing roles, the factors leading up to resignation, etc. This may be the case of one individual, but another individual may have a completely different set of events leading up to their current career within the SSE as each have their own narrative. What makes it even more complicated is that the findings in studies of career transitions may or may not apply for the context of this thesis.

Since there is no one authoritative framework that would be used as a guiding approach to study various forms of career transitions (Mussagulova et al., 2023), all this classification seems to accomplish is to help with establishing some sort of basis of metrics to evaluate whether a transition is successful or not. For example, if we classify a transition as an interrole transition, simply obtaining the new role could be the metric to claim that a transition is successful. A successful career transition is often subjective in nature, but most authors use a simplistic conceptualization of a successful transition as having attained employment (objective metric) (Bynner & Parsons, 2002; Mussagulova et al., 2023). In the case of the type of career transition of this thesis, it combines multiple forms of transitions which creates an intersection between multiple success metrics such as obtaining a new career in the new sector, adapting to the new context and properly assuming their changing life role, etc.

Part of the goal of these papers is to find ways to make individual interested towards the SSE and help them with transitioning from the for-profit sector towards the SSE, so knowing what type of transition we are dealing with can be helpful as well as knowing what constitutes a successful transition. Since there is no one true framework for both the typology of career transitions and typology of outcomes, we are left with a gap to deal with. In the meantime, attainment of higher job satisfaction in the new job (Xu, 2017; Zhou et al., 2021) could constitute the subjective metric on which we can base ourselves on.

3.3.3. Classification of literature on career transition from the private for-profit towards the SSE

Based on the main questions motivating the research papers on the “private for-profit to SSE” transition, I have classified these papers within the five theoretical perspectives on career transition

by Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021). As we can observe from the Table 3.3, most of this research focuses heavily on the decision-making and adjustment perspectives, but it does not mean that they were not interested in predicting when a transition towards the SSE will occur (career stage), in the influence of their personal or professional network on their transition (relational), or in the implications on their selves (identity).

In fact, these perspectives are put in light either in their discussion or suggestions for future research. I will provide detail on these later. What I have observed is that these articles do take a holistic approach into studying the topic and while their research question mainly fit under one or two specific perspectives, the other perspectives are part of the sub-variable that they take into consideration.

3.3.4. Context of the studies

These studies often open with statistics on the amount of individuals employed either in the non-profit sector or the SSE (Cohen-Scali et al., 2015; Nelson, 2017). As the career shifts from the private to the nonprofit have become more common as more managers are looking for “purpose” and “meaning” in their professional lives (Schlosser et al., 2017), and non-profit organizations are increasingly hiring employees with working experience in profit-driven companies (Niendorf et al., 2022). At the individual level, researchers have found workers from the non-profit sector more intrinsically motivated than their peers from the public and for-profit sector (Benz, 2005; Leete, 2006; Lyons et al., 2006; Narcy, 2009).

With these observations, these papers have the goal of identifying what makes the SSE more attractive (Cohen-Scali et al., 2015) and to understand better how to help executives make the transition (Cohen-Scali et al., 2015; Nelson, 2017; Niendorf et al., 2022; Schlosser et al., 2017).

Table 3.3: Summary of the classification of the literature on career transitions from the for-profit towards the SSE

	Career stage	Decision-making	Adjustment	Relational	Identity
Cohen-Scali et al. (2015)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What personal and professional reasons and events have led these executives to want to engage in the SSE? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do these executives commit within the SSE? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do these executives project themselves within the sector?
Nelson (2017)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do nonprofit employees feel as though their careers are a product of intentional choices? • Do nonprofit employees feel as though their careers are a product of chance events? • What combination of planned and unplanned events initially led to respondents' nonprofit career choices? 			
Niendorf et al. (2022)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do commercially imprinted managers transition to a not-for-profit job? • Which biographical origins facilitate the ability to develop effective responses to multiple, potentially conflicting institutional logics in the not-for-profit setting? 		
Schlosser et al. (2017)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What critical, and potentially unanticipated events triggered career agency and stimulated the change process? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What differences did these individuals identify and manage in their roles, accountabilities, and compensation? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were their identities affected by the challenges they faced when they transitioned to their second career in the non-profit sector?

3.3.5. Theoretical foundations for studies on transition towards the non-profit sector and the SSE

Different theoretical models have been useful to guide studies on career transitions towards the SSE, mainly towards the non-profit sector. In Cohen-Scali et al. (2015)'s paper, they used Schlossberg et al. (1995)'s model, known as the "4 S's" that take a systemic perspective to understand a professional transition. There are four major sets of factors that influence an individual's capacity to cope with a transition that needs to be considered. The Table 3.4's key issues' questions are taken from Marcdante et al. (2020) to summarize the model:

Table 3.4: Schlossberg's theory of adult transition (4 S's)

The S's	Key Issues/Questions to Answer When Starting a New Position/Role
Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has changed due to this transition (location, relationships, activities, role, expectations)? • Is this your desired transition (first choice)? • What other stressors are occurring right now (family response, salary, relocation)?
Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the values that give purpose and meaning to this new role? • How have you approached previous transitions? • What strengths will help you? • How resilient have you been in the past? • What habits/traits may hinder you? • How committed are you to this new role?
Social support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who supported you in the recent past? • How available are they now (are they transitioning too)? • How does this transition affect your closest supports (partner, friend, family)? • What new people can you seek out for support? • What other supports are available (orientation, mentorship, discussion of clear expectations)? • What is available in the institution? City or elsewhere?
Strategies	<p>Prioritize the issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the first step you can take for high-priority issues? • What steps do you (as an individual, couple, or group) need to take? • What if a challenge occurs? • Where can you find strategies to address challenges? • If frustrated or lost, how can you modify the situation? • How can you reframe the issues? • What can you do to manage the stress?

Source: Marcdante et al. (2020)

Once again, there is an overlap between Schlossberg et al. (1995)'s 4 S's model and Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021)'s five theoretical perspectives. The *situation* is similar to *decision making*, the *self* and the *identity*, the *social support* and *relational*, and the *strategies* and *adjustment*. Both groups of scholars encourage a holistic approach which is reflected in their models. This model presents a number of questions which may spark narratives from individuals.

As for Nelson (2017), she relied on psychological theories of career decision making. Instead of relying on (Bandura, 1977)'s widely used *social learning theory*, which asserts that individual action is explained by the interaction of personal environmental determinants, she rather turns to the effect of chance on major life changes and decisions. The concepts of *happenstance*, *chance*, *serendipity*, and *synchronicity* used by different scholars, refer to the basic idea that there are “unplanned, accidental, or otherwise situational, unpredictable events or encounters that have an impact on career development and behaviour” (Rojewski, 1999). There is an accumulative effect of these experiences that shape preferences over time and according to the happenstance learning theory (HLT), the genetic influences, instrumental learning experiences, associative learning experiences, and environmental conditions could influence career decisions (Krumboltz, 2009). HLT is used as a framework for nonprofit career awareness and eventual career selection, i.e. how people familiarize themselves and interact with the nonprofit sector prior to careers in the nonprofit workforce. Several mechanisms such as volunteerism, service learning, and socialization can introduce individuals to the nonprofit sector (Hackett et al., 1989; Jones & Abes, 2004; Nelson, 2017; Sax et al., 1999).

Similarly, Schlosser et al. (2017)'s research is also interested in the chance events as defined by Rojewski (1999), more specifically the critical events that triggered career agency and stimulated the change process. Then, they explored how individuals react and adapt to these opportunities, meaning that they exert control over their careers even if it implies a change in their self-views. Theories on career agency and identity have been identified as an important element to study. Their chosen definition for career agency is “a process of work-related social engagement, informed by past experiences and future possibilities, through which an individual invests in his or her career” (Tams & Arthur, 2010) while the chosen definition for identity is “parts of a self composed of the meanings that persons attach to the multiple roles they typically play in highly differentiated contemporary societies” (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Schlosser et al. (2017) highlights the importance of identity narratives (storytelling), how they brand themselves, to understand who they are, how to adapt, and what work roles matter to them.

Finally, for Niendorf et al. (2022), since they study the adaptation strategies by managers and their challenges due to their prior experience within the for-profit sector, they relied on theories of institutional logics and imprinting to understand how it impacts their transition. A narrow

definition of institutional logics can be described as follows: “systems of cultural elements (values, beliefs, and normative expectations) by which people, groups, and organizations make sense of and evaluate their everyday activities, and organize those activities in time and space” (Haveman & Gualtieri, 2017). A dominant institutional logic provides descriptions and guidance for decision-making as well as for acting (Cohen & Duberley, 2015). Then, the *imprinting* is understood as an individual’s past experiences that are reflected in their present attitudes, choices, and behaviour which influences their career changes. The commercial imprinting is then the influence of their commercial institutional logic on their current career transition. The emphasis on the institutional logic and imprinting could be considered as observing the variables related to the *situation* (Schlossberg et al. (1995)‘s 4 S’s model) of the individual.

I have observed that the underpinning of some of these studies share similar ideas or useful approaches applicable within a social constructionist study. For example, a model such as the “4 S’s” contributes by sorting and rearranging a wide range of questions that could be disorganized, but still useful for prompting narration from an individual. Also, other studies simply acknowledge the importance of narration for career transitions. What makes it different from social constructionist studies are the conclusions that are rather based on cause-and-effect type of findings. Nonetheless, their literature review may provide with theories that are applicable for studies based in discourse analysis approaches; it is rather the findings that are less transposable if they are following a positivist paradigm.

3.3.6. Findings

In the studies focusing specifically on career transitions towards the SSE (mainly the non-profit sector) that I found, they consistently show that career transitions towards the non-profit sector are motivated by a desire for meaningful work and value alignment (Cohen-Scali et al., 2015).

When describing their past work involvement before the transitions, Cohen-Scali et al. (2015) identified three logics of their career construction. The first is motivated by a “vocational” logic where they choose very selective and specific careers as a response to parental expectations to some extent. The second one is the “finding oneself” logic described by the difficulty of choosing their study program which is translated by trials and errors in the programs they choose to study in. This leaves an impression that their career path is quite chaotic. The third logic is the “bouncing

back” where individuals from less privileged social backgrounds enters the workforce early. The opportunities they took do not necessarily represent a deliberate choice. The attitudes found by the researchers were grouped by the “adventurers” seeking the discovery of the selves through their work experiences, the “militants” seeking a greater connection with their values and coherence with their work behaviours and convictions, and the “ambitious” seeking hierarchical progression with greater salary. The professional history of these individuals was diverse.

Even if the background of these professional is heterogenous, these studies found similar reasons that motivated individuals to quit their for-profit work to go towards the SSE. The motivations fell into five categories: competency driven, altruistic, personal priority driven, disillusioned, and sector-blind (Schlosser et al., 2017). Some of the reported specific causes were the painful work experiences such as lack of recognition, disapproval of decisions from the company leading to conflicts and burnouts, the desire for serving the greater good and for work-life balance (Cohen-Scali et al., 2015; Schlosser et al., 2017).

Contributing influences of facilitating the individual in navigating in the new institutional environment of a non-profit (the biographical origins) were the length of social sector engagement, hybridity in previous job positions, international exposure, volunteering, and diverse network (Niendorf et al., 2022). Significant identity and role adjustments were required for commercially imprinted managers in navigating in the new settings (Niendorf et al., 2022). Executives, in the case of Schlosser et al. (2017)’s study, needed to redefine their professional identities, or branding, to align with nonprofit values and missions due to difficulties of integration. Other obstacles include low salaries, difficulty of accessibility of the sector as it is easier to be rejected if identified as an outsider, absence of support (Cohen-Scali et al., 2015). These findings conclude the need for individuals to diversify their work experience to become more aware of the non-profit sector (that is part of the SSE) and increasing the chance of being exposed to it (Nelson, 2017; Niendorf et al., 2022).

As much as these influences facilitated the integration in the SSE, these were also categorized as contributing factors leading up to discovering the SSE or sparking the desire to change careers like a moment of realization. The term of “chance events” has been used in Nelson (2017) and Schlosser et al. (2017)’s studies to qualify the causes that motivated the individuals’ desire to

change. As much as individuals may already have humanistic values due to their upbringing, the interests only progressively took place (Cohen-Scali et al., 2015). Volunteering for example exposed individuals to interesting work in the non-profit sector (Nelson, 2017) and learn more about the sector before making the leap (Cohen-Scali et al., 2015).

Overall, in these papers, researchers (1) establish some demographic characteristics of the studied population, (2) bring to light the background experiences of these individuals, how these affect the likelihood of the career transitions, and their ability to navigate in the new environment, (3) the contextual causes leading up to wanting to change (which includes some of the reported background experiences), and (4) the reasons these factors implied for their desires.

3.4. Conclusions from the literature review on career transitions

In summary, this chapter began by introducing two significant models to categorize and help with conducting research on career transitions as a general phenomenon of study in a holistic manner. The first one is the cycle process (Figure 3.1) suggested by (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021) which include the five theoretical perspectives (Table 3.1) on career transitions. The second one is the self-regulation model of career transitions (Figure 3.2) by (Akkermans et al., 2024). These are useful as they allow studies such as my thesis to consider different components that could be tackled and investigated more in-depth. The identity aspect was the one that stood out to me as being a central component. Furthermore, the identity aspect, especially the interaction between multiple identities in the process of career transitions is suggested to be a knowledge gap in the literature (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021).

Afterward, I explored the literature on career transitions concerning the change from the private for-profit sector towards the SSE. Most of these studies have the downside of targeting executives or higher-up managers as their studied population. This limits the applicability of the findings to a larger population. The emphasis of these studies were also on the transition towards the non-profit sector, which is only a subset of the sectors included under the umbrella term of the SSE. As much as some studies such as the ones from Cohen-Scali et al. (2015) and Schlosser et al. (2017)

recognizes the narrative elements in career transitions, they are still mostly based on a positivist approach to analyze their data.

Noting the lack of social constructionist approach to study career transitions, the limited number of studies on the specific transitions towards the SSE, the lack of connections between disciplinary silos (Akkermans et al., 2024) or theoretical perspectives (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021), and the knowledge gap in understanding the interaction of multiple identities in career transitions, I consider reasonable for my thesis to use a discourse analysis framework focusing on identities. Even if current research on career transition is often based on a positivist research, I will still rely on them as a baseline for understanding the general discourse on career transition, as I believe they are relevant for illustrating general consensus on varying aspects of career transitions.

4. Narrative Career Identity

“[H]ow we seek to spend our time may depend on how much time we perceive ourselves to have.”

– Atul Gawande

Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End

In this chapter, I will attempt to link together the previous literature review going from the history of career counseling to the specifics of career transitions. Based on my literature review, I have observed the recurrence of identities across Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021)‘s theoretical perspectives of career transitions, and the temporal nature of Akkermans et al. (2024)‘s self-regulating model of career transitions. This along with the philosophy of life design of career counseling in the global economy era lays a good foundation for thinking about career transitions in terms of identity narratives.

I will first explain how identity is viewed within a social constructionism philosophy as it relates to discursive analysis, hence narrative approaches. Then, I will cover the importance of narration in the construction of identities. Finally, these two elements will be tied to the topic of career transitions.

4.1. Identity

Identity is difficult to define because there are many important differences between the disciplinary and meta-theoretical approaches to identity (Alvesson et al., 2008). There are many theoretical perspectives that can be used to study identity, but since the methods of counseling in the global economy era is based in the constructionist philosophy, it would rather make more sense to approach the question of identity using that philosophy. As mentioned in the history of career counseling at the global economy era section, Savickas (2008) argues that identity includes the ways we identify ourselves to others and the ways others recognize us. Identity is a result of

language as it is being narrated, historically situated, socially constituted, and culturally shaped. This view is coherent with the social constructionist conception of identity.

From the perspective of identity, this turn to language means that to have an identity is a product of language. To have a personality, for instance, is an effect of language where the concepts are given to us by psychology, a social practice focused on elaborating on this concept of psychology to describe human experience and action. Personality is not a pre-existing entity residing in our minds but derives from a set of linguistic concepts used to understand particular phenomena. From a poststructuralist perspective, meanings are never fixed, for example, the same concept or expression may mean different things across contexts and time. The meaning of a concept depends on who is saying it, when, to whom and for what purpose. As a result, there is no essential, unified self since identities are always temporary and shifting (Burr, 2015; LaPointe, 2011).

This turn to language has been a foundational element for discursive approaches which can range from the micro-level approach to the macro-level. Macro-level approaches examine the wider social and institutional contexts and their role in constituting, regulating, or controlling social reality. These approaches include poststructuralist, Foucauldian and critical discourse analysis. Then, micro-level approaches examine discourse within the immediate context (talk-in-interaction) of interaction in determining meanings and constructing reality. These approaches include conversation analysis, ethnomethodology, and discursive psychology (Burr, 2015; LaPointe, 2011). There are other approaches who are situated in between these two ends of the spectrum.

Two approaches result from these discursive views when talking about identity: one focused on the historical structures with regulatory power on identity and the other on the construction of identity in interaction (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). A useful concept to consider when adopting these approaches is the subject position. Briefly, the concept of subject position refers to the process by which our identities are produced. The idea of positions within discourse is also similar as a person may take up implicit positions within the discourse. We cannot choose to avoid the subject positions and our choice is to only accept or resist them. The subject positions that we occupy constrain and shape what we do and are taken as part of our psychology which provides

us with our sense of self, the ideas and metaphors with which we think, and the self-narratives we use to talk and think about ourselves (Burr, 2015). I will cover more in depth the concept of subject positions at the chapter 5.2.

A person can be described as the summation of the subject positions in discourse that they currently occupy. These positions are fleeting or changing meaning that our identity is never fixed, but always in process, always open to change (Burr, 2015). It becomes important to know which identities are made relevant in which context, and how it is being performed through one's positioning.

4.2. Narrative identity

Since identities are constructed through language and human beings are fundamentally storytellers who experience themselves and their lives in narrative terms (Burr, 2015), narratives are particularly relevant for identity construction (McAdams, 1993). It is argued that narratives are a fundamental mode of thought and form of knowledge by which human beings give meaning to their actions, understand their experience and temporality (Abbott, 2008; Bruner, 1991; LaPointe, 2011).

Narratives about life stories also accomplish the main (Western) cultural expectations of what it means to have a self (Linde, 1993a). First, we expect our self to have continuity through time, and narratives construct causality between events which brings relevance of past selves to the present one. Second, this self needs to be distinguished from others, but still related to them and by positioning through the use of the pronoun "I" for example, the self achieves this distinction within their story. Narratives further construct this sense of self, this "I", by assigning actions and characteristic to this self through the positions of the narrator and protagonist in the story. Third, the distinction between the narrator and the protagonist allows for moral evaluation and reflexivity, which is essential for a specific and moral self. Narratives establish moral value by aligning with master narratives, or masterplots (Abbott, 2008), reflected through cultural expectations of a given context, including social evaluations of actions of the actor. In short, the following explanation from McAdams and McLean (2013) summarizes the essence of the narrative identity:

Narrative identity reconstructs the autobiographical past and imagines the future in such a way as to provide a person's life with some degree of unity, purpose, and meaning. Thus, a person's life story synthesizes episodic memories with envisioned goals, creating a coherent account of identity in time. Through narrative identity, people convey to themselves and to others who they are now, how they came to be, and where they think their lives may be going in the future.

A narrative identity is slowly built over time as people tell stories about their experiences to and with others. Selves create stories, which in turn create selves (McLean et al., 2007). Through repeated interactions with others, stories about personal experiences are processed, edited, reinterpreted, retold, and subjected to social and discursive influences. This iterative storytelling process allows individuals to develop a broad and more integrative narrative identity (McAdams & McLean, 2013).

This explanation for narrative identity appears to be in opposition to the social constructionism view of the person as multiple, fragmented and incoherent, because our subjective experience feels as if there is coherence to the person we are, both historically and across the different areas of our lives. One possible explanation for this seemingly contradiction is that our feelings of consistency and continuity in time are provided by our memory. Then, our memory allows us to look back on our behaviours and experiences and selects those that seem to fit together in some narrative framework, looking for patterns, repetitions that provide us with the impression of continuity and coherence (Burr, 2015). Discursive psychologists and cultural anthropologists recognize that most people in the Western world are invested in a philosophical tradition that values personal integrity and the consistency of identity over time. Westerners are drawn towards being seen and seeing others as someone in particular and that explains why they may feel defensive or embarrassed when encouraged or forced to see the contradictions in their own identity (Edley, 2001).

On the other hand, a research on identity as narrative in role transition by Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010), suggests that narrative also facilitates rupture, which allows people to shape their future actions and explore potential versions of tentative selves. They argue that uncertainty in individual's constructed identities is resolved, and the transition completed, not when they have changed role, but when that individual is finally able to resolve the conflict and contradiction in their narrative repertoire.

The narrative methodology poses a number of challenges and limitations which requires us to remember that life stories are not necessarily accurate recollections of what actually occurred in the past, but it is rather the result of the recollection of life events or turning points that they consider as significant (Wolf, 2019).

4.3. Narrating career

Since the identity view of career sees an individual's work life as a story, carrying meaning (Savickas, 2008), narrative is the most significant means for career identity construction. This argument is based on the shared features of the concepts of careers and narratives (LaPointe, 2011). As previously defined, careers are defined as “an individual's work-related and other relevant experiences, both inside and outside of organizations, that form a unique pattern over the individual's life span” (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). In simpler terms, it is a sequence of experiences over time. Then, the defining characteristics of narratives are sequences and temporality (LaPointe, 2011).

In the context of career studies, narrative approaches explore how important events and career decisions are framed to cope with past or present changes and to motivate potential future changes (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; McAdams, 1993; Wolf, 2019). The narrative form will determine which events are important, rather than the events influencing the story form. For example, a promotion can be considered as a positive career move for an individual from a bureaucratic perspective, while in a professional discourse, it may be associated to meanings that challenge their own professional expertise and requires identity work (LaPointe, 2011).

This narrative approach coincides with the life design model of career counseling. Savickas (2015) argues that:

The path of life designing discourse begins by defining career as a story that a person tells about her or his working life. Because we live in language, that story imposes meaning on vocational choice and work behaviour. Life-design counseling follows the path of a meaning-making dialogue between client and counselor to first encourage clients to narrate an identity story with continuity

and coherence and then prompt clients to engage in adaptive action in pursuit of a life that they want to live.

By keeping track of the stories within the relationship between the career counselors and their clients, counselors enable clients to reflect on their lives. Dwelling in their own stories often destabilize old ideas that hinder their decision-making capacities and usually enables an awareness that leads to making a choice. Clients then build a new perspective that allows them to revise their identity story. From that new perspective, they elaborate or change their stories in ways that clarify choices and prompt transformative actions to bridge the transition (Savickas, 2015). This is especially relevant for macro role transitions, because it is argued that identity changes throughout those transitions. New roles require new skills, behaviours, attitudes, and patterns of interpersonal interactions, they may lead to changes to an individual's self-definitions (Becker & Carper, 1956; Hall, 1976; Hill, 1992; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010).

In summary, given the need for deeper insights into how individuals narrate their career transition (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010) and the centrality of identity in these narratives, my research will use a theoretical framework grounded in discursive analysis. This framework will allow me to identify the evolving identities of individuals going through a career transition through their narration.

Part II

Methodology

Part II outlines the methods used to analyze the career transitions of individuals from the private for-profit sector to the social and solidarity economy (SSE). In chapter 5, I will first talk about the theoretical framework used for this study, and how it shapes the type of findings that I will report. Finally, in chapter 6, I will detail on the research design which shapes the type of data I will be selecting for the analysis as well as shaping the analysis itself.

5. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the theoretical framework used to study the subject positions within individuals' narration about their "private for-profit to SSE" transition will be outlined. Since I am focusing on identity in career transitions within the SSE, I have chosen a mix of discursive psychology (DP) and critical discursive psychology (CDP) as my theoretical framework rather than the narrative analysis approach. The reason for not choosing narrative analysis is that I am not mainly using a linguistic-based approach to look through the lexical and syntactic configurations of texts and to follow their buildup into the topical organization of the text, using a cognitive-based approach searching for overarching structure of the plot organization. Nonetheless, there is an interactive-based approach that I will use that views stories (and their meanings) as local accomplishments for the participants, but it remains secondary in my analysis. Those are approaches that Bamberg (2012) draws on to work with narratives.

First, I will explore the philosophy behind DP, its core principles. Then, I will cover CDP and its key concepts (interpretative repertoires, ideological dilemmas, and subject positions). Finally, I will provide a justification for combining these two approaches for my thesis.

5.1. Discursive psychology (DP)

There are multiple strands of DP, but I will mostly rely on the version of DP summarized by Sally Wiggins in her book "Discursive Psychology – Theory, Method and Applications" Wiggins (2017). This version of DP was developed by Derek Edwards and Jonathan Potter, at Loughborough University in the UK and their methodology was based on from earlier development with Margaret Wetherell. To complement this version, I will also take in account the broad understanding of DP as explored by Linda McMullen in her book "Essentials of Discursive Psychology" (McMullen, 2018). Belonging under the umbrella term of *discourse analysis*, this form of research methodology is defined as:

“a theoretical and analytical approach to discourse which treats talk and text as an object of study in itself, and psychological concepts as socially managed and consequential in interaction”.
(Wiggins, 2017)

As the name suggests, DP is concerned with psychological issues. However, the principles and theoretical arguments underpinning DP challenge our mainstream psychological understanding (mostly in the USA and Canada) of what we know about talk, about cognition, and about reality. Much of psychology is concerned with trying to understand people’s thoughts, opinions, feelings, and sensation, but we cannot get into the other’s people mind and bodies (Burr, 2015; McAvoy, 2016; McMullen, 2018). Once we express our thoughts through language, they become distinct from the private realm of our minds. Our thoughts are transformed into something external and socially interpretable due to a socially shared understanding of language.

As previously explored, this emphasis on language presents us with a radically different view of personhood and personal agency. We are accustomed to talk about ourselves as having a personality, as holding beliefs and opinions, and making choices coming from our own mind, but in DP, more precisely due to its epistemological foundation in social constructionism, it denies us psychological properties such as personality, attitudes, opinions and motivation as these things are only present in discourse as the result of language. It denies us in the sense that these properties are viewed as constructs that emerge from discourse. Instead of speaking about “personality” when trying to understand ourselves, a more appropriate term to use is “identity” as it avoids the essentialist connotation of personality, and it is also an implicitly social concept. When we identify something, like an animal, we give it an identity (Burr, 2015).

Wittgenstein (1953)’s philosophy, one of the principles for DP, does not deny that we do not have an “inner world” of feelings, thoughts, etc., but it argues that language is more of a toolkit since language has its own rules and structures that exist outside the individual mind. Following this historical root of DP, alongside the speech act theory (Austin, 1962), ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967; Goffman, 1959), conversation analysis (Sacks et al., 1974), sociology and scientific knowledge, semiology and post-structuralism, “[p]sychological concepts become the object of study, not the framework that determines theory and analysis” (Wiggins, 2017). Although DP challenges psychology, it should not be regarded as a critic of psychology but rather as a different way of doing psychology.

On that regard, DP focuses on psychology *as it is lived* by people in everyday life. It examines, for example, how people bring to relevance the minds, the identities or the emotions of others through their social practices and interactions, instead of examining through their individual thoughts or experiences. It does not try to attempt to understand what is inside people's mind such as their motivation or attitudes (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wiggins, 2017). In other words, DP:

allows you to address questions about how people, located in particular contexts of time and space, take up available discourses and use features of language (sometimes referred to as linguistic devices, strategies, or resources) to perform social actions, including how they construct versions of reality with what possible consequences. (McMullen, 2018)

DP has three core principles (Potter, 2011). First, discourse is both constructed and constructive. This principle requires some philosophical considerations about how we understand the relationship between things in the world and our knowledge of those things. DP embraces the relativism stance, which implies that it does not assume that things in the world (our objects of study) are separated from our representation of them. This approach is part of a broader set of approaches often referred to as social constructionism as mentioned previously. We cannot identify an independent (and single) reality, since what counts as knowledge (or “truth” or “reality”), is argued to be the product of social and cultural practices (e.g., the ways we talk and behave). Also, since these practices differs in different cultural contexts across time, knowledge has different consequences for different people, meaning that they are historically and culturally situated, which questions the taken-for-granted knowledge we have about the world. The things we considered as common sense are challenged and examined for how they become common sense. When discourse is said to be constructed, it means that it is built through a range of cultural resources (words, intonation, question, and culturally available phrases and expressions). When it is said to be constructive, it means that it brings particular versions of reality (or “truths”), into being through the way in which we talk about people, events, actions, and organizations (Burr, 2015).

Second, discourse is situated within a social context. While discourse is constructed and is constructive, it does so in a specific place and time, meaning that it is needed to analyze it within that context. Discourse is situated in three ways: within a specific interactional context (e.g., chatting with friends, talking to a doctor in hospital), within a rhetorical framework, within the

turn-taking sequence of interaction. It is not a passive mean to tell people what we are thinking and feeling, or report on events, but it is a social action and always contextually-bound.

Third, discourse is action-oriented. Following the previous two principles, particular functions or actions are accomplished by the discourse. The focus on what discourse (text and talk) is *acting on and in* the context in different ways also means that not just the type of words used in a piece of talk (e.g., verbs, detailed descriptions) are identified, but also where they are sequentially located in the talk, how they are responded to by other people, and what social action they are involved in. For example, remembering is not viewed as a process of retrieving a memory to tell others, but as a way for an individual to construct a version of reality to help them attain social goals through justification, attribution, classification, or blaming (Willig, 2001). In other words, cognitive processes such as remembering, attribution, and identity are framed as social action.

In summary, based on these three core principles, “DP is focused on the construction of psychological issues within discursive practices, and the consequences of these constructions for both theory and practice in psychology” (Wiggins, 2017). For example, using DP, we could examine how emotion terms are used in particular contexts of interactions to undermine or bolster accounts of people’s activities instead of using these emotional terms as evidence of physiological or cognitive states (Edwards, 1999). People’s production of identities, responsibilities, and behaviours in particular ways in talk will be examined as well as the implications of these constructions in that specific context. This micro approach to DP is able to illustrate these constructions, but when it comes to locating these discourses within the social and cultural framework, it becomes more difficult (Locke & Budds, 2020). This is where critical discursive psychology becomes useful.

5.2. Critical discursive psychology (CDP)

Sharing the same foundation of discourse analysis as DP, CDP, on top of examining interactions at the micro-level with both the structure and the content of interaction (how, when and what is said), also focuses on the broader ways of understanding and being that are associated with the historical, social, and cultural contexts in which the discourses being analyzed are located

(McMullen, 2018; Wiggins, 2017). For example, CDP does not only aim to only examine how identities are produced on and for particular occasions, but also how history or culture limits these identity performances and how these performances of identity can influence and change historical and cultural contexts (Billig, 1991). CDP differs from DP by being less concerned with the sequential aspects of talk and more concerned with the broader patterns of talk across a particular data set (Wiggins, 2017).

Broader cultural issues such as gender, class, sexually, cannot be reduced to an analysis of the sequences and structure of talk (through conversation analysis (CD) and DP), thus this justifies the importance of examining how the interaction is located within a particular historical, social, and cultural context. CDP views discourse as the intersection between the everyday language use and the broader culture, where cultural factors influence and shape the way we use language (Wiggins, 2017). It acknowledges that people are both paradoxically the products and the producers of discourses (Billig, 1991). This approach is done through the identification of three key concepts that I will summarize shortly: interpretative repertoires (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), ideological dilemmas (Billig, 1988; Billig et al., 1988), and subject positions (Hall, 1988; Hollway, 1984).

First, the concept of **interpretative repertoires** is defined as “basically a lexicon or register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterize and evaluate actions and events” (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Interpretative repertoires are “building blocks of conversation” (i.e., linguistic resources) that can be used within social interaction and that allows us to talk about objects and events in coherent ways. They are part and parcel of any community’s common sense as they provide a basis of shared understanding. This means that when people talk (or think), they do a patchwork of various interpretative repertoires already provided for them by history, but it does not mean that there is no possibility of creating new or original conversation (Edley, 2001). In CDP, the concept of interpretative repertoires is important, because when we are looking at different ways that people can talk about certain topics, we can understand the kinds of limitations that exist for the construction of self and others. Some repertoires are more culturally dominant than others and they are established over time until they become naturalized and understood to be common sense or “fact” (Wiggins, 2017).

Second, the concept of **ideological dilemmas** goes beyond the prevailing Marxist notion that ideologies were integrated and coherent sets of ideas that served to represent the domination of the ruling sections of society as natural or inevitable. Billig et al. (1988) do not deny the existence of this form of “intellectual” ideology but claimed another kind of ideology: “lived” ideologies. “Lived” ideologies are said to be composed of the beliefs, values and practices of a given society or culture (its common sense) which closely resembles the term of *culture* (Edley, 2001). Contrary to “intellectual” ideologies, “lived” ideologies are characterized by inconsistency, fragmentation, and contradictions (Billig, 1988; Billig et al., 1988). CDP argues that people can they these contradictory or oppositional ways of understanding a concept (dilemmas) to argue for different positions (Wiggins, 2017); the contrary maxim provides the seeds of arguments as they permit social thinking. Without oppositions, “there would be no way of arguing about dilemmas or understanding how opposing values can come into collision” (Billig et al., 1988).

There are points of overlap between interpretative repertoires and ideological dilemmas, but we should see that interpretative repertoires must be part of a culture’s common sense, while ideological dilemmas can alert us that different interpretative repertoires of the “same” social object are themselves constructed rhetorically, developed overtime through historical and argumentative exchange (Edley, 2001).

Lastly, the concept of **subject positions** takes root in Althusser (2001)‘s notion of “ideological state apparatuses” where ideology creates or constructs “subjects” by drawing people into particular positions or identities. Our identities are always in relation to the texts or narratives available to us meaning that what we say and think about ourselves and others will always be shaped by the language provided for us by history (Hall, 1988). Subject positions can then be defined as “locations” within a conversation where identities are made relevant by specific ways of talking. It also offers a conceptual framework for the speaker which in turn frames the possibilities and limitations of what one can be and how they can act within a particular discourse (Davies & Harré, 1990). For example, if we understand ourselves as a particular type of professional, we would come to understand our behaviour and to experience ourselves in the terms of that identity. The knowledge we have about that profession is located within that professional discourse and that determines how we can understand, think, and act within that discourse. Since our ways of talking can change within and between conversations, as different discourses or

interpretative repertoires are employed), the identities of the speaker can change as well. In CDP, subject positions become interesting to identity because, 1) it allows us to see what these positions accomplish within the local context of their production, 2) it tells us something about the broader ideological context of the discourse. A trick to spot a subject position is to try to stay aware of who is implied by a particular discourse or interpretative repertoire. We can ask the question of “What does a given statement or set of statements say about the person who utters them?” (Edley, 2001).

5.3. Combining DP and CDP

Since career identities are examined in this thesis as a narrative practice (see section 4.3 on *Narrating career*), it implies a close attention on both micro- and macro-levels (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008). As discursive psychology (DP) is typically defined as a micro/bottom-up form of discursive analysis, and critical discursive psychology (CDP) as a macro/top-down form (Wiggins, 2017), I find it appropriate to mix both branches of discourse analysis for my analysis.

Combining these approaches allows for a nuanced analysis that captures both the detailed ways individuals talk about their experiences, along with the action accomplished by their use of language and the broad societal and cultural influences on their narratives. Since CDP aligns with the notion that people are both the products and producers of discourse (Billig, 1991), this perspective acknowledges the agency of the individual. This is particularly relevant for the study of career transitions towards the SSE which involves a shift in identities and engagement with broader economic and social ideologies.

6. Research Design

Following the theoretical framework based in DP and CDP while focusing on subject positioning through a lens of narrative career identity, this chapter will detail on the research design that will help with bringing an analysis that goes beyond stating the obvious.

6.1. Research strategy

6.1.1. *Goal of the research*

The goal of the research is to deepen the understanding of the career transitions from the private for-profit sector towards the SSE. Based on the literature review, only a few of the research on career transitions focused specifically on that specific transition, but finding from other research can be applied to that specific transition as it shares common elements such as the type of transitions and the required adaptation in navigating in a new institutional setting. Models and categorization as useful to map out how one could approach the study of career transitions, but there was a need to see the applicability and transferability of these models in analyzing career transitions from the private for-profit sector towards the SSE.

On the other hand, since I will be using an approach based on social constructionist epistemology and most of these theories were based on a positivist approach, the findings in the literature review had to be adapted to my study. This also serves as the objective of expanding the knowledge on career transition, using an underutilized theoretical perspective. Scholars such as Ramarajan (2014) called for conducting research across silos in the context of studying multiple identities. In fact, a central component of these findings was the consideration of identities in studying career transitions. In the perspective of social constructionism, studying subject positions would be of main concern.

6.1.2. *Research methodology*

Qualitative methods will be used for this study. As presented in chapter 4 on narrative career identity, narratives are argued to be particularly ripe for studying career identities. DP and CPD are compatible with the philosophy supporting the relevance of narration in making sense of career transitions.

6.2. Participants

6.2.1. Selection criteria

The criteria of inclusion are individuals with prior, or current experience in consulting roles within the private sector, living in North America or Europe. Also, they must be in any states of the career transition, whether it is in consideration of changing, currently in the process of changing, or already transitioned in their new work role.

The idea behind choosing individuals with prior experience in consulting was, in a way, to have an element of similarity with my personal work background since I had prior experience within a consulting environment. This could help me better understand the participants and elaborate further during the interviews. It is also to depart from other studies on career transitions towards the non-profit sector which relied most on executives as their studied demographic. I wanted to have participants with a more diverse professional background, but not too different so that there would be shared similarities to facilitate the identification of patterns.

The choice of the region was based on professional similarities and economic environments which may prevent generalizing a vast and diverse set of culture. The nature of the analytical approach of discourse analysis also requires an understanding of the broader historical, cultural, or societal discourses relied on by the participants which means that it is favourable to select participants who share a similar cultural understanding as me.

6.2.2. Recruitment

My recruitment efforts advantaged the participation of individuals within my city as it was based on my social media and personal network. My social network is mostly comprised of people living near Montreal. Out of the ten participants, six were kept for the analysis.

To recruit the participants, I published a post on different social media (see Annexe 1) such as LinkedIn, Facebook and asked some of my peers if they know other people who are willing to participate in my research. After interviews, I would ask for participants to suggest for other people I could reach out to ask to become participants as well.

6.2.3. *Sample*

In total, ten people did the interviews and it was all done in French. Information about their age or gender was not asked, as it could have positioned the person within a specific category already. It is better for them to decide whether that information was relevant for their answers. DP treats context as relevant only when it is made relevant in the interaction (Wiggins, 2017).

Out of the ten interviews, four have been discarded. The reasons for not proceeding with these interviews were either that their new workplace did not fit with how I defined the SSE (see chapter 3.3.1), that they wanted to be involved with the selection of the extracts (discourse analysis requires data to stay in its natural form), or that their transition (or desired transition) was still too unclear.

6.3. Data collection/selection

Due to the narrative nature of discourses on career path and the central role of identity within narrative as explore at the chapter 4, I have opted for the semi-structure format. As much as there are predefined themes and questions, the questions are open-ended which allows the participants to narrate their story and they are free from going into any direction as I do not interrupt if they go off the predefined themes.

One caveat of semi-structure interviews would be that once the participants end their monologue, I will steer them back to the interview guide questions if I do not have a follow-up question about something specific that they mentioned. In general, interviews may unintentionally guide participants' narrative in specific directions as it is argued by some discourse analyst. The interviewer is imposing the topic on the participants, thus leading them to talk about things they wouldn't otherwise talk about (Taylor, 2013). Indeed, research interviews, such as semi-structured interviews, are generally considered to elicit information, but they are no less natural or distinctly

different from “a real life” situation. “Life and career stories occur similarly across wide context (Linde, 1993b) and interviews can be analyzed as one kind of practice and interaction for doing identity” (LaPointe, 2010).

Interviews are a familiar situation where people “naturally” produce the “interview” kind of talk and talk in interviews is not completely different to talk in other contexts. There are overlaps, for example, in conventions the speakers would follow or presentations of new versions of their accounts (who I am, where I come from, where I work, etc.) (Taylor, 2013).

The interviews mostly took place through video conferencing platforms which allowed participants from other areas to participate. Zoom was the main video conferencing platform. Only the voice recording was kept. One interview was done in person and another over a phone call. Participants were made aware that they will be recorded and if they no longer wish to participate, they were free to request for their data to be removed.

6.4. Data analysis

Before analyzing the data, I transcribed the interviews. Since my theoretical approach is situated between the micro- and macro- level of analysis, the verbatim remained simple. No transcription notations such as pauses, emphasis, etc., were considered as necessary for analyzing the data. I have also anonymized as much as possible certain information such as cities, name of companies, specific sports which could have contributed to easily identify the participants. These details were replaced by generic identifiers.

To analyze the data, I followed some of the suggested steps laid down by McMullen (2021) and Wiggins (2017) while introducing some of my own steps. Since engaging in data analysis in DP is not a fixed predefined process, these steps can vary in orders and can be done in iteration.

The first step is to read and listen to the entire data set as a whole without really focusing on any aspect in particular. This will help in having a general understanding of the context and essence of the interview.

The second step is to make notes on passages that seems to have something to say about my topic and tentative research question. At the same time, I am not strictly looking for explicit mentions about career transition as the topic itself covers a wide range of sub-topic which makes it quite difficult to decide which passages are worthy of keeping or ignoring. Even if the passage does not make it into the first pass, it does not mean that it will not be discarded forever. Some of the sensitizing strategies outlined by Wood and Kroger (2000) has been used. It was very counterintuitive, but the strategy of focusing more on what the speaker is doing, rather than the content or meaning of the talk has been the most difficult part of the process. This was done by separating the verbatim line by line in a spreadsheet and then adding comments in another column.

The third step and fourth step are to select extracts of the data and deciding how to group them. Early analysis grouped extract together around a theme, but as the analysis went on, it was more efficient to group in order of the speech as there were cross references between the extract. This made it impossible to perfectly group by them as an extract could be complementing two other unrelated extracts. Context was also very important to consider thus grouping them instead of sequentially analyzing them would make it difficult to see the flow of the participant's narration.

Finally, the fifth step is to analyze and write up in detail how the participants are arriving to position themselves in a certain way. This is done iteratively. There was a fine line between using the knowledge gained from the literature review to help identifying more themes and underlying implications of what an individual's speech may express, and not making assumptions about the meaning of their words.

6.5. Criteria for assessing nonfoundational qualitative research

Since my study relies on a social constructionist epistemology, the criteria used for assessing the validity in positivistic paradigm cannot be applied. Social constructionism differs from positivism since it does not sit well attempts to establish "truth" even when placed between quotation marks (Seale, 1999). It recognizes the subjective and constructed nature of knowledge as previously explored. In other words, this paradigm rejects the notion of objectivity and the acceptance of

neutrality, thus calling for a different set of criteria to assess the quality of empirical research within a nonfoundationalist standpoint.

The five dialogical principles used to assess this research are inspired by ethnographical, confessional, critical, and post-modern work which coincides with social constructionism. They are not a set of fixed standards, but should respect the context in which the research is conducted and be validated through a conversation between researcher and readers (Pozzebon et al., 2014). Here are the five criteria as suggested by Pozzebon et al. (2014) that I will rely on to assess my research: authenticity, plausibility, criticality, reflexivity, and artfulness.

Pozzebon et al. (2014) claims that these five guiding principles are comprehensive enough to satisfy most critical interpretive research. I will then present a brief definition of each dialogical principle and how they are applied for my study.

Authenticity

Authenticity refers to the genuineness of the field experience as a result of the researcher being there, involved with the participants, faithful to the experience in writing up the account (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993). In my research, this is straightforward as I conducted the interview myself and transcribed the data word for word based on the recording.

Plausibility

Plausibility addresses the write-up phase, defined as the ability of the text to connect to the reader's worldview (Walsham & Sahay, 1999). The research result should make sense, meaning that it should resonate with the reader's personal and disciplinary backgrounds and experiences. By connecting the participant's narratives to existing literature on career transitions and the SSE, my research establishes a coherent and plausible reasoning that aligns with theoretical expectations. Also, the contribution to theory and practice will be relevant career counselors as I have adopted the life-design philosophy as presented in the history of career counseling by Savickas and Savickas (2019) where narration plays an important part in constructing one's career. My analysis then relies on principles of narrative career identity which is in adequation with the discipline of career counseling.

Criticality

Criticality refers to the ability of the text to challenge readers into reconsidering their taken-for-granted ideas and beliefs (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993). It implies proposing new and better ways of understanding and thinking about ourselves and others (Schultze, 2000). Since the topic of my research concerns transitions from the private for-profit sector towards the SSE, it involves already there a process of challenging certain norms as the private for-profit sector

Reflexivity

Reflexivity requires researchers to declare their biases since it involves reflecting on how the process of doing research influence the way it is carried and shape its outcomes. It does not mean removing such biases but disclosing these biases. It recognizes that research is only one representation among many possible representations (Hardy et al., 2001). Throughout this study, I am using self-revealing writing (i.e., the use of personal pronouns) to let the reader aware about my presence in the point of view I am representing. I will also be talking about my biases specifically due to my own career path and my personal experience regarding the topic. Furthermore, I let the readers know about my involvement in shaping the discourse for the interview with the participants.

Artfulness

Artfulness concerns the creative manner in which researcher can touch their readers, provoke them, interest them, mobilize them through their story (Czarniawska, 1999; Glesne, 2016; Whitemore et al., 2001). The dimension of feeling is just as important as the cognitive dimension when presenting the findings (Patton, 2014). This may contribute with facilitating the reception of the writings. In my case, this dimension in the guiding principles for assessing my research may be less present, but I attempt to bring the emotional element within my introduction and conclusion. This will bring a sense of connection to the readers. I am also trying within the best of my capacity to write simple sentences without convoluted phrasing by overly using passive voice.

Part III

Results

In this part of the thesis, I will provide my analysis of each of the participants that I have selected and kept for the research. After going in depth in the participants' interview, a summary of the most common subject positions and the ones that I have evaluated as more relevant for the study will be presented. How these positionings are being carried out and what are its implications will be discussed. I will then end up on the categorization of these subject positions to draw an overall picture that represents the essence of the findings.

7. Interviews

In this chapter, I will analyze the interview of the six participants by mainly focusing on the subject positions they perform and what it may perform. Then, I will attempt to summarize the essence of these interviews by presenting the positionings that appear the most relevant for me and categorize into more comprehensive themes.

7.1. Erwin

Erwin studied in school program A in college as a reason to be able to play sports A. Few years later, his dad started an enterprise where he eventually worked at. He then became a co-owner and associate with his dad at that enterprise. His early career was said to be very entrepreneurial in nature due to that experience.

Afterward, he went to work for a private company in agri-food sales management and took, later, a role as a business advisor within the traditional economic development. That's where he eventually discovered the social economy sector. He did not immediately make the switch in his career towards the SSE at that time, but the idea to work within that sector never left his mind. He is now a team coordinator in an enterprise within the SSE. For Erwin, this transition is said to have brought him a lot of positivity and stability. It is difficult for him to envision a future where he is not involved directly or indirectly with the SSE.

7.1.1. *Early career*

When asked about his career path, Erwin's recollection of his self before the transition into SSE presents a person that had let his circumstances dictate his choices due to the limited knowledge he mentioned that he had about the direction of his career:

- 1 **E6 Erwin** : J'peux pas dire j'ai choisi. J'pense c'est la carrière qui m'a choisi, pis ça va revenir à aussi
- 2 à tantôt l'économie sociale là, mais au début début de ma carrière, ben en fait, moi aussi j- j'ai
- 3 commencé au cégep là, au cégep, je jouais au sport A, j'étudiais en programme A, ça pas rapport du

4 tout, j'savais pas trop dans quoi j'm'en allais non plus à ct'époque là t'sais, j'avais pris programme A³
5 parce que c'était juste la porte d'entrée pour pouvoir jouer au sport A à l'époque, au Cégep, à
6 Ville A.

When Erwin started college, it is suggested that he did not choose a school based on the credentials it had for a particular program. This is because he has not mentioned that a particular interest in a school program, or type of job, guided him towards this early career move of choosing a college. He expresses that it was rather guided by his desire to play sports A (lines 2-6). Going into the school program A was more an afterthought as he mentions that “ça pas rapport du tout” (lines 3-4). It is presented as a means to an end rather than the reason that motivated his choice for a college since he says that the school program A was “juste la porte d'entrée” to play sport A (line 5). Hedging with “juste”, he downplays the reasonability behind his motive. He also explicitly mentions that he did not know where he was going into at that time (line 4). His younger self is then presented as quite unaware, passive, and lost towards building his career.

After I prompted about the process that led him to the SSE, his self-representation as a lost person is further emphasized when he talked about the moment he began to work for his father's enterprise as he moved up the ladder:

1 **E8 Erwin** : Bref, j'ai commencé par être euh, j'ai commencé un parcours entrepreneurial de ma
2 carrière, alors j'ai été copropriétaire avec mon père de cette entreprise-là. C'est lui qui l'a fondé, mais
3 j'suis devenu associé avec lui par après. Et euh, j'ai beaucoup aimé le contact avec les clients, l'aspect
4 de gérer l'entreprise [...], pis euh, s- j'aimais la flexibilité, la la clientèle, c't'américain, beaucoup leur
5 façon de faire affaire. Donc euh, c'est c'est ça, ça a été naturel, je peux pas dire, j'ai choisi. J'ai pas
6 choisi grand-chose quand je pense à ça [rires]. [...]
7 **E9 Kenny**: [...] éventuellement, euh, y'a certaines choses qui se sont passées pour que tu décides de
8 faire le le changement vers l'économie sociale.
9 **E10 Erwin**: Oui.
10 **E11 Kenny**: Pourrais-tu me décrire un peu plus en détail ce ce processus?
11 **E12: Erwin**: Oui, tout à fait. Dans le fond, c'est sûr, c'est beaucoup par rapport à mes valeurs
12 personnelles, pis je serais pas surpris que tu vois ça souvent dans ta recherche sur les valeurs
13 personnelles qui ont toujours un pe- un peu été là, j'ai toujours aimé conseiller, servir les gens et les
14 aider. C'est sûr que là j'suis rentré dans un contexte entrepreneurial, mais j'aimais quand même ça
15 servir mes clients, j'aimais ça m'assurer que tout allait bien avec les fournisseurs. Donc t'sais, après
16 d'avoir fait un bac, parce que je me disais faut ben que j'aie un bac, t'sais pour avoir un certain niveau
17 d'éducation, euh. Ensuite, j'ai travaillé dans le privé quelques années en gestion de vente
18 agroalimentaire. J'ai aimé l'entreprise mais j'aimais pas le milieu des ventes c'était c'était beaucoup
19 trop axé sur les résultats, c'était pas humain... assez humain à mon goût. Donc euh, c'est là que j'ai
20 tombé dans le développement économique traditionnel dont j'ai devenu un conseiller aux entreprises.
21 Alors là j'allais ch- trouver ce désir là de contribuer à aider les gens, mais dans l'optique de soi,
22 démarrer ou de faire croître dans l'entreprise. Là c'était plus au niveau de l'entreprise traditionnelle à

³ The school program A is unrelated to the SSE

23 l'époque. Mais c'est là, quand j'ai commencé en ####, à l'Organisation A pis que j'ai là, j'ai
 24 commencé à toucher à l'économie sociale. C'est là que j'ai, j'ai su que ça existait.
 25 **E13 Kenny:** Ah
 26 **E14 Erwin:** Donc euh, pis [stumble with words] j'ai fait comme "Oh wow, oh wow, oh wow". Ça
 27 c'était un coup de cœur, là, vraiment un gros coup de cœur. Je voulais constamment en savoir plus, je
 28 voulais vraiment euh, t'sais travailler sur des projets d'économie sociale, mais c'est des projets assez
 29 complexes en général.

30 **E18 Erwin:** Donc c'est c'est là que j'ai vraiment découvert le l'économie sociale, pis durant les #
 31 années suivantes, même si je suis resté dans le développement économique plus traditionnel, c'est tous
 32 des inc, des incorporés, travailleurs autonomes. J'avais toujours l'idée d'économie sociale, ça me
 33 lâchait pas, t'sais. Mais encore là je peux pas dire je l'ai choisi, c'est, c'est naturellement, ça m'a tiré
 34 selon mes valeurs personnellement.

Even when working for his father, he says that he didn't choose much, suggesting that he did not have full agency. Erwin's use of the phrase "ça a été naturel, je peux pas dire [que] j'ai choisi. J'ai pas choisi grand-chose quand je pense à ça [rires]." (lines 5-6) positions him as passively experiencing his career rather than actively shaping it. But his laughter may signal that this was partly a joke suggesting that he was not oblivious of the choices he had to make throughout that journey.

By explicitly stating that he cannot claim that it was his choice, Erwin distances himself from the work he did for his father. Paradoxically, by saying that "ça a été naturel", he does not oppose this line of work either as it does not suggest a particular resistance towards those kinds of work. He even previously stated that "[il a] beaucoup aimé le contact avec les clients, l'aspect de gérer l'entreprise" (lines 3-4). The breakdown of his role into different components allows him to specify which aspects he enjoyed about it.

On the other hand, regarding his subsequent work experiences, the distance he takes from his choice to work in a private entrepreneurship environment was made more apparent. At lines 13-14, when mentioning that "[il] aimai[t] quand même ça servir [s]es clients", an aspect he enjoyed about his work, he hedges beforehand with "C'est sûr que là, j'suis rentré dans un contexte entrepreneurial" which functions as an acknowledgement of the expectations and perceptions associated to entrepreneurship in the private sector. It also serves to distance himself from that sector by presenting that involvement as not ideal for him as these expectations and perceptions may contradict with the values espoused by the elements he enjoyed about his work. Using "C'est sûr" also suggests a concession to the idea that this choice of working in a private entrepreneurship

context may seem contradictory with his narrative, but he then hedges with “mais j’aimais quand même ça servir mes clients” which justifies the path he took.

At the interventions E8-E12 where Erwin talks about the aspects he enjoyed within his experiences in the private sector, combined with the intervention E6 at lines 1-2 where Erwin mentions “J’pense c’est la carrière qui m’a choisi, pis ça va revenir à aussi à tantôt l’économie sociale là”, he foreshadows the continuity between his seemingly disconnected experiences within the traditional private sector (entrepreneurship for his father’s company, sales management, and traditional economic development) and his current involvement within the SSE. At the lines 3, 4, 14-15, and 20-21 of the extracts above (E8-E14), Erwin enumerates the elements he enjoyed from his experiences within the private sector. Those are presented as very humanistic in nature such as interacting with his clients and advising them, serving people, contributing to help people. By naming what he enjoyed from his experiences, it provides a clear parallel between his past work and his current vision about his work within the SSE. Also, by explaining what he did not like, it provides him with a justification for having left that kind of environment, such as work too focused on (sales) results and performance (lines 18-19). All these reasons were made clear when Erwin says that the process of transition towards SSE is “beaucoup par rapport à [s]es valeurs personnelles” (lines 11-12). When he touches on the topic of the SSE and says that he became aware of its existence, he says that was a “coup de cœur” (line 27) for him. Emotional connection is used to confirm his interest for the sector.

At that point, Erwin spoke with more passion and commitment about his choices. When he mentions his desire to learn more (“Je voulais constamment en savoir plus (à propos de l’économie sociale)”) and his work in the SSE (“je voulais vraiment euh, t’sais travailler sur des projets d’économie sociale”), these sentences were accentuated with adverbs such as “constamment” and “vraiment” (lines 27-28). In contrast to the intervention where “[il] avai[t] pris programme A parce que c’était juste la porte d’entrée pour pouvoir jouer au sport A” (E6 lines 4-5), the adverb “juste” is used to devalue the intensity of that interest and the importance of the choice he made. The level of his agency appears to be stronger through these formulation as it implies choosing according to his desires and interests. Even if he ends by saying that “Mais encore là je peux pas dire je l’ai choisi” (line 34) and that it naturally drew him due to his personal values – which appears to position him as passive – this personification of the SSE amplifies the commitment

towards his choice as it does not present the usage of vocabularies of resistance or of second-guessing his choice.

To summarize, going back to intervention E6 line 1 where Erwin personifies his career as an entity that chose him (“J’peux pas dire j’ai choisi. J’pense c’est la carrière qui m’a choisi”), by mentioning once more that “[il] peu[t] pas dire [il] l’[a] choisi” (E18 lines 33-34), it closes the story loop on his early career path that led him to the SSE. Throughout that story loop, a dilemma emerges. Not presenting agency over a decision due to external forces can both be used to distance from a choice that does not seem coherent with one’s desire, and to amplify the intensity of alignment with one’s value. The personification of the SSE as a career acting on Erwin’s behalf can be seen as him having little agency over his career path, but on the contrary, the appearance of not having control in this context reflects the lack of resistance and an acceptance of his choice. Little justifications for the transition towards the SSE was provided as it is said to have felt natural for him.

7.1.2. Comparison between SSE and traditional private sector

I prompted Erwin to bring to light the contrasts he observed from the clients he had in the traditional private sector compared to those in the SSE. When positioning himself as belonging more on the side of the SSE, there is a restraint from taking a stance of direct opposition to those who are not part of the SSE:

1 **E20 Erwin:** [...] t’sais les gens dans le privé... j- je ferai attention à ne pas trop généraliser, mais ce
2 qu’on voit t’sais c’est des gens, t’sais t’as divers niveaux, de de type de gens dans le privé. T’sais t’as
3 des gens qui sont on parle travailleurs autonomes, des gens qui veulent juste créer leur propre emploi,
4 qui veulent avoir la flexibilité, qui veulent faire les choses à leur façon t’sais. Ça ça je trouve ça
5 quelque part très louable pis j’ai j’ai t’sais, j’ai pas dit « Ah c’est pas un bon modèle », c’est c’est,
6 encore là c’est un cheminement très personnel. Ensuite, dans le dans le quand qu’on va plus dans le
7 inc, donc dans le privé incorporé, là c’est sûr que y’a une emphase de plus en plus vers le profit, de
8 plus en plus, c’est des valeurs tir, de très belles entreprises familiales qui existent, y’a des des des très
9 belles PME, des petites entreprises qui ont des très bonnes valeurs. Mais c’est sûr, c’est toujours dans
10 l’optique de maximiser les profits, pis ça bénéficie à peu de personne. Les propriétaires, pis ceux qui
11 les propriétaires généreux, ben là oui, en forme de bénéficiaire de l’entreprise, ça existe et de plus en
12 plus. Mais à l’époque, c’était ce contraste-là de dire, « Ben, j’ai ma business, je fais à ma façon, je
13 réponds à mes besoins personnels, entrepreneurs ou de propriétaire d’entreprise, je suis dans un
14 domaine que j’aime bien, pis que je maîtrise. » Pis oui, je les ai employés, pis je leur donne un job, pis
15 y sont bien contents, t’sais. Mais l’économie sociale c’est pas juste ça, c’est que, un (énumération), ça
16 n’appartient pas à une personne ou à 2 personnes. Ça prend minimum 3 dans le cas d’une coopérative.
17 Dans le cadre d’un OBNL, ben là, c’est c’est la collectivité, ou un réseau, en particulier. Donc un
18 OBNL [...] y’a des employés par tous les fonctions d’une même entreprise, c’est pareil, c’est une
19 question de valeur. Donc les gens dans l’économie sociale ont des valeurs extrêmement humaines. Un
20 (énumération), ils ont une mission sociale à supporter, déjà en partant, c’est beaucoup. Y’ont vraiment

21 le cœur sur la main. Ils veulent aider à à changer le monde, ils veulent et d'améliorer les conditions des
22 gens de toutes les façons possibles, ils veulent aussi aider au niveau de l'environnement parce que on a
23 ça aussi beaucoup. Donc c'est vraiment le fait qu'ils veulent tellement aider les autres qui répond à mes
24 propres valeurs, t'sais, intrinsèque, qui fait que c'est sûr ça m'a attiré plus vers l'économie sociale que
25 vers l'entreprise privée que où un momné (moment donné) je voulais même plus rien savoir. [rires]!

26 **E56 Erwin:** Émotionnellement dans le fond, je me sens en paix avec moi-même, parce que je sens que
27 j'ai je je suis mes valeurs profondes pis je suis à bonne place, t'sais, chaque personne a un parcours
28 unique.

Before giving his opinion about workers in the traditional private sector, Erwin hedges with the statement of “je ferai attention à ne pas trop généraliser” (line 1) which suggests that handling this topic can be prone to moral judgments and it presents himself as not wanting to making generalizing statements towards the private sector. There was a worry to not take moral grandstanding and to respect others' perspectives by saying that “chaque personne a un parcours unique” (lines 27-28) and as taking a stance of superiority can undermine credibility or be considered as being biased against the private sector. This consists of the use of the interpretative repertoire of respecting the uniqueness of each individual's path. Since everyone's journey is presented as unique, it suggests that it belongs to the person to decide how they want to act upon it. This mentality goes along with the tendency in western society to give importance to individual agency and freedom. At lines 2-4, after enumerating reasons why someone would choose to be self-employed within the private sector, Erwin distances himself from the potential judgment associated with the statement that self-employment “c'est pas un bon modèle” (line 5) by prefacing it with “j'ai pas dit”. He finds that commendable (line 5), but there is some reservation to this claim using “quelque part” suggesting he does not fully ascribe to this approach. He then proceeds to claim that it is a very personal path (line 6). Once more, there are were reservations in praising the good values of small and family businesses by hedging with “mais c'est sûr, c'est toujours dans l'optique de maximiser les profits, pis ça bénéficie à peu de personne” (lines 9-10).

What Erwin values instead are the values carried by the SSE which are contrasted to the values he ascribes to people from the private sector (lines 12-15). The SSE values are defined as extremely humane, with a social mission of improving the lives of others, of the environment, and changing the world (lines 18-23). The desire of “tellement aider les autres” (line 23) is the aspect that is said to fit with his own values. By enumerating these values and prefacing with the statements that the SSE is not only about giving a job to employees, meeting their own needs by having a business,

being in a field that interests you, etc. (lines 12-15), Erwin passes the judgment that SSE is something more than the traditional private sector. Therein lies the dilemma and difficulty of having to respect and not judge someone's autonomy to choose their own path and do what fits their need, but at the same time, to position oneself within the value system of SSE that sometimes sit in opposition to certain aspects of the traditional private sector. An example of contradiction is the respect of the individual as the master of their own choices and the betterment of the collective at the expense of our desires as individuals.

7.1.3. Choice and agency

During an off-topic conversation where we spoke about our family situation, Erwin explains how he had to build his own path due to his personal situation and make his own choices since his parents were divorced. It was an opportunity for him as in some cases, he explains that children can feel bad about following their own path due to their upbringing and the influence of their surroundings:

- 1 **E76 Erwin:** Mais en même temps, c'est beaucoup une question de valeur personnelle, de comment t'as
- 2 été élevé, de l'influence de ton entourage qui peut être des freins assez intenses de suivre, t'sais ta
- 3 passion t'sais pis je pense que tu le dis très bien que tu dis tes, les parents tes parents bon vietnamiens
- 4 qui arrivent ici, un peu euh t'sais, veux veux pas, ça a été difficile par rapport à la guerre, de la stabilité
- 5 des enfants fait qu'ils vont projeter leurs propres leurs propres angoisses et sécurité sur leurs enfants,
- 6 pis t'sais font pas ça pour mal faire c'est juste la mécanique psychologique naturelle de projection que
- 7 tout humain fait, dans les contextes similaires, pis, ça disait que le l' l' l'enfant se sent un peu mal de
- 8 suivre sa voie qu'il veut réellement suivre ça aurait pu être la santé comme tu dis, ça peut être
- 9 d'économie sociale, ça peut être l'anthropologie j'dit n'importe quoi là, mais t'sais, c'est c'est, fait que
- 10 oui, ça prend du courage, moi j'étais chanceux j'ai un peu dû forger mon propre chemin là, mon
- 11 contexte personnel à moi là t'sais, j'étais un enfant de parents divorcés, pis ça a pas toujours été facile,
- 12 mais, fait que j'avais pas tant des pressions de bord pis de l'autre t'sais, [...] Fait que j'étais j'ai j'ai dû
- 13 vraiment faire mes propres choix.

For him, not having this pressure caused by the projection of insecurities and anxiety of parents on their children is presented as a blessing as he was said to be spared from the consequences it may have on his life decisions. He expresses that being left by himself without external pressure allowed him to have control over his life (lines 10-12), therefore positioning himself as having agency early on. The psychological concept of "projection" as a natural mechanism (lines 5-6) that he applies universally ("que tout humain fait" (lines 6-7)) amplifies the difficulty of overcoming parental influence. In his case, he presents himself as being lucky (line 10) for not being subject to this psychological concept regarding his career path. This downplays the full extent of his agency

as the “chance event” element of not having pressure from his parents (line 12). It suggests that if he’s had that pressure, maybe he would have not followed the path he really wanted to take.

On the other hand, he mentions that he did not choose much in his life (E6 line 1), such as his career, which at first glance may seem contradictory to the statements from the extract above at lines 10, 12-13, where “[il a] un peu dû forger [s]on propre chemin”. To resolve this apparent contradiction, Erwin uses the marker “un peu dû...” to minimize the extent of his agency, which indicates that while he had to make his own choices due to an obligation, these were not entirely free from external circumstances or fully aligned with his passion. A quote representative of this deeper discourse on agency can be summarized by the quote that says ‘one can do what they will, but they cannot will what they wills’. What this means is that while individuals have the freedom to act according to their desires, they do not have control over the formation of those desires. In this case, it highlights the construction of Erwin as being both a subject influenced by his environment and an agent making choices. The absence of agency over his desires is more apparent in the following extracts:

- 1 **E35 Kenny:** Ouais, avec les gens que que je discute parfois, c’est un peu difficile de faire ce ce
- 2 changement pour plusieurs, plusieurs raisons personnelles ou bien raisons de d’idéologie. [...] est-ce
- 3 que vous avez vécu ce genre de de contradiction interne ou non?
- 4 **E36 Erwin:** Pas du tout, pas du tout non, parce que t’sais, depuis que j’ai découvert l’économie
- 5 sociale, ça a toujours resté dans ma tête ça l’a toujours resté là, j’ai toujours voulu travailler de près ou
- 6 de loin avec l’économie sociale.

- 7 **E40 Erwin:** Ah excuse, j’pourrai pas j’pourrais pas revenir dans le privé. J’veux dire, je trahirais mon
- 8 essence même, je pourrais pas faire ça. Pis t’sais, on sait jamais, on sait jamais l’entreprise privée mais
- 9 qui a une immense vocation sociale, mais encore là, ça ça revient à ce que je dis tantôt, t’sais, ça peut
- 10 pas, je peux j’pourrai pas faire autre chose. J. j’serais pas capable. Honnêtement, j’pourrais pas revenir
- 11 en arrière, c’est trahir c’est trahir mes valeurs.

- 12 **E44 Erwin:** Pis plus l’entreprise est grosse, plus que c’est vrai. Pis y faut faire attention aussi quand on
- 13 voit des initiatives des grandes entreprises ou d’autres entreprises, qui ont des initiatives sociales, mais
- 14 c’est bien en soi, j’veux dire ça l’a un impact, mais c’est souvent ce qu’on appelle du **social washing**
- 15 ou du greenwashing. T’as déjà entendu ces termes-là?

- 16 **E56 Erwin:** [...] Mon parcours était quand même assez atypique au niveau de ma carrière. J’ai essayé
- 17 beaucoup de choses, j’ai eu des chambardements personnels qui ont aussi eu un impact là-dessus,
- 18 surtout dans la trentaine, je dirais. La vingtaine c’était assez stable, la quarantaine, c’est [inaudible]
- 19 stable aussi, mais la trentaine [rires], c’était un peu rock and roll. Mais, malgré tous ces hauts et ces
- 20 bas-là ben, le le côté économie sociale, l’entrepreneuriat social m’a toujours attiré

When Erwin speaks about the time he discovered the SSE, instead of saying how he always thought about it, he was rather the subject of the influence of the SSE as SSE was the thing staying

in his mind (lines 4-5) instead of him thinking about it. There is an attribution of agency of the intangible concept that is the SSE. Furthermore, in the same sentence structure where he presents himself as being subjected to the influence of the SSE occurs once more as he explains that “l’entrepreneuriat social [I]’a toujours attiré” (line 16). It presents this social entrepreneurial interest as deeply rooted within himself. Since the discovery of the SSE, he also holds himself accountable as he states that he cannot betray his values by doing something else (lines 10-11). It showcases his commitment of his current choice to having quit the private sector to join the SSE after he gained knowledge about it.

At the same time, he mitigates this commitment by saying that “on sait jamais” (lines 8) about never going back to the private sector. It suggests a possibility of going back to the private sector in the future, which he frames as betraying his essence, but this will be under the condition that his work will have an immense social vocation. Mentioning that condition presents himself as loyal to the SSE’s values even in the potentiality of changing sector in the future.

Since the SSE has more agency over him within his discourse, it suggests that by letting go of control, it may be easier to get where he wants to be. This advice of letting go of control becomes more evident in the next extract. The following interaction occurred after we spoke about my own fear in my current career transition::

- 1 **E98 Erwin:** “What would you do if there was no fears?” Fait que si qu’est-ce que tu ferais si si t’as
- 2 aucune crainte, t’sais, évidemment faut être pragmatique dans tout ça là, on s’entend, mais pis réaliste
- 3 Mais si j’avais pas ces craintes là, qu’est-ce que je ferais? Pis ça ça souvent ça m’a amené loin ça dans
- 4 mon cheminement, pis à chaque fois que j’avais cette questionnement là, on dirait je me suis amené,
- 5 pis c’est là que j’ai été plus loin vers l’économie sociale, c’est là que j’ai été amené vers les bonnes
- 6 personnes la la bonne job au bon moment, c’est comme Ah, OK, t’sais pis ça se plaçait naturellement,
- 7 t’sais on a un peu l’impression qu’on peut tout contrôler là... C’est faux! Je te l’annonce! [rires]
- 8 **E99 Kenny:** Ah, Oh non!
- 9 **E100 Erwin:** Oublie ça, oublie, ça, oublie ça. C’est le plus grand, c’est le plus grand mythe qu’on peut
- 10 tout contrôler, c’est impossible, impossible. Moi j’dis un peu moi c’est ma mère qui disait ça dit elle
- 11 me répète depuis j’suis jeune, elle me dit Erwin, laisse l’eau couler sous les ponts, ça veut dire essaye,
- 12 t’sais essaye pas de t’accrocher à divers idées sur la rivière, tu vas pas avancer, laisse le couler, laisse le
- 13 couler, suis ton je dirais de développer ton l’écoute de ton intuition aussi c’est un très très très grand
- 14 une très grand aide. L’intuition c’est tout ben selon moi là, l’intuition, c’est ce qui est bon pour nous.

In this extract, Erwin brings up a quote that stuck with him. It is unclear what Erwin meant by control as it could be about controlling desires, and/or the outcome of one’s actions, and/or emotions, but a part of it is about not resisting a certain feeling such as fear and worry. When

bringing up the words of wisdom that his mother kept telling him, which is to let the water flow and to not try to latch on ideas that are flowing under the bridge (lines 10-13), the metaphor can be interpreted as the mind having many thoughts and it is not possible to control whatever it thinks. Letting go of control is said to have naturally led him towards the SSE (lines 5-7). The concept of “natural” in this discourse conveys a sense of being innate and genuineness which positions himself as more authentic now than before. Also, by agreeing with his mom’s advice to not “t’accrocher à divers idées sur la rivière” (line 12), he constructs an identity that is flexible and open to change, which he associates with authenticity. Erwin also positions himself as pragmatic and realistic since he mentions that when conquering your fears, “évidemment faut être pragmatique dans tout ça” (line 2). This may leave the interpretation that he is not free to do whatever he wants even without those constraints. But to let go of these factors of resistance such as fear and worry, Erwin explains that this requires us to develop the skill to listen to our intuitions, which suggests that initially, when listening to our intuitions, it may not be appropriate enough to follow them.

In the following extract, when I explicitly asked about his emotions, he uses those concepts to justify his transition in his career path towards the SSE:

- 1 **E55 Kenny:** [...] Comment vous vous sentez un peu émotionnellement entre ce que vous faisiez avant
- 2 et maintenant comme émotionnellement, comment vous sentez à travers ce ce changement de carrière?
- 3 **E56 Erwin:** Émotionnellement dans le fond, je me sens en paix avec moi-même, parce que je sens que
- 4 j’ai je je suis mes valeurs profondes pis je suis à bonne place, t’sais, chaque personne a un parcours
- 5 unique. Mon parcours était quand même assez atypique au niveau de ma carrière. J’ai essayé beaucoup
- 6 de choses, j’ai eu des chambardements personnels qui ont aussi eu un impact là-dessus, surtout dans la
- 7 trentaine, je dirais [...] [rires], c’était un peu rock and roll. Mais, malgré tous ces hauts et ces bas-là
- 8 ben, le le côté économie sociale, l’entrepreneuriat social m’a toujours attiré, pis là, émotionnellement je
- 9 me sens carrément stable. C’est vraiment la c’est j’ai retrouvé la stabilité et y’a une certaine sérénité
- 10 intérieure. Fait que t’sais... C’est pour ça je te disais je pourrais pas faire autre chose, si je trahirai mes
- 11 valeurs, je vais retomber encore dans les fluctuations que j’ai vécu dans trentaine. J’ai pas du tout le
- 12 goût t’sais. Fait que c’est c’est nonon c’est ça c’est

By expressing that this transition brought him emotional stability and peace, he provides a rationale beyond practical or financial goals. This rationalization through emotional concepts suggests a deep connection between career choice and emotional well-being.

Erwin mentions that he tried many things (lines 5-6) (perhaps the many ideas flowing under the bridge), but the SSE was always attracting him (the water that he needed to let flow) amidst

the ups and downs (lines 7-8). The variety of experiences and personal challenges builds a narrative of resilience, but as unpredictable as his life was portrayed, he ended up in the SSE which reinforces the idea that his professional alignment is genuine as difficult time did not push him away from that path. There is also an element of accountability that he holds towards his values since he expresses that it would be a treason to do something other than being involved within the SSE. It legitimizes his choice of staying within the SSE and demonstrates a strong commitment towards that choice.

Many of Erwin's discourses mirror conventional wisdom such as the importance of not trying to control everything, and not letting fear control your decisions. Those ideas are open to interpretation, yet they are framed to resonate with the SSE:

- 1 **E61 Kenny:** [...] comme quand vous parliez tantôt de, des des devoirs envers la famille ou bien si
- 2 jamais y'a des gens dans l'entourage qui voient le succès d'une autre manière des fois, on peut être
- 3 rencontré avec une résistance des autres, [...]
- 4 **E62 Erwin:** Ah oui oui oui non vraiment vraiment oui, oui pis t'as raison y'a sûrement des gens où ce
- 5 que, la notion du succès est très différente, mais dans ma famille, dans mon entourage, c'était pas ça, le
- 6 succès c'est plutôt est-ce que t'es heureux dans ce que tu fais, est-ce que t'as un impact positif dans ce
- 7 que tu fais? pis ça c'est le critère, ça c'était les critères sur lesquels les gens se basaient pour savoir si
- 8 quelqu'un est bien dans un dans une carrière.

Values from your family and surroundings is presented as having a great influence on your worldview and in the case of Erwin, the notion of success transmitted by his family is said to emphasize on the question of whether your career brings you happiness and brings a positive impact. This positions his past self as carrying values closely related to the SSE due to the influence of his environment. By introducing the rhetorical question of positive impact through what you do and how this question can be used to determine "si quelqu'un est bien dans [...] une carrière" (lines 6-8), Erwin shifts the constructions of career development away from personal success and gains. It reframes it under a more altruistic vocabulary.

Returning to the intervention at E20 lines 5-9, Erwin elaborates on the experiences of individuals in the traditional private sector, including those with a family business and self-employed workers. He notes that they have their own personal goals which are to achieve flexibility, provide jobs to others, being able to be generous (maybe through charity donation with their excess profit). These objectives relate to the questions of whether their work brings them

career happiness and whether their career brings a positive impact. While happiness and positive impact can mean different things to different people, these concepts in the context of the traditional private sector presented by Erwin are often tied to personal benefits. This contrasts with Erwin's moral framing where he attributes a broader significance to those questions. The moral framing is clarified in the following extract which distinguished his perspective from the traditional business approaches he presented:

- 1 **E57 Kenny:** [...] maintenant que vous êtes stable là, [...] Et comme ces émotions, est-ce que vous
2 pouvez décrire un peu c'était quoi ces ces émotions de avant?
3 **E58 Erwin:** Avant ben écoute c'était c'était beaucoup d'incertitude, euh, beaucoup de doutes, des
4 frustrations. [...], mais c'est sûr que c'était j'avais aussi des craintes quand même beaucoup de
5 craintes, fait que t'sais, des fois c'était WOW de l'espoir pis tu retombais [inaudible] pis là tu disais
6 woo j't'un peu découragé. Évidemment j'pas tombé en dépression ou quoi que ce soit, Mais, euh
7 c'était vraiment up and down comme émotion. Vraiment up and down, un rollercoaster qui a y'a un
8 peak à un certain moment pis je dirais tranquillement pas vite le rollercoaster c'est y'a s'est stabilisé
9 pis, étrangement plus que j'allais vers l'économie sociale, plus que ça se stabilisait, t'sais. Y'avait pas
10 que ça, on s'entend, c'est pas la job qui gère nos émotions, on le dit beaucoup là, mais, ça l'a
11 grandement aidé. Ça l'a vraiment grandement aidé, pis c'était un peu cette recherche de comment
12 est-ce que je peux vivre selon mes valeurs, mais en même temps j'ai des obligations personnelles,
13 t'sais, familiales, fait qu'il y avait un peu ce combat là, pis je pense que des fois des gens qui veulent
14 transiter vers l'économie sociale, qui sont dans la consultation privée, qui font un gros salaire, pis qui
15 ont une famille à supporter, pis un un rythme de vie à maintenir, c'est là ça c't'un autre sacrifice que tu
16 pourrais peut-être. que les gens seraient peut-être appelés à faire, c'est de dire woups leur rythme de vie
17 doit peut-être un peu changer. Mais, moi ça m'a jamais impacté au niveau de mon rythme de vie, t'sais
18 c'était pas du tout ça là.

So far, when speaking of his values, Erwin highlights their alignment with his professional choices in the SSE, which is centered on impacting positively the community and on personal fulfillment. This provides the context to the altruistic responses to the question of whether his career makes a positive impact.

He further develops on these goals where his search of meaning is to answer to the question of how he can live according to his values (lines 11-12). This goal is mitigated through the use of “un peu”, as it is not the only goal he needed to satisfy. In addition to not be the sole purpose of his existence, this pursuit is also somewhat in opposition to his personal obligations as a parent. By saying “mais en même temps” (line 12) and describing it as a “combat” (line 13), he acknowledges a conflict between his professional aspirations and his responsibilities at home. The combative vocabulary emphasizes the struggle between these two life roles. For Erwin, it was not described

as an issue since he claims that it did not impact his lifestyle, suggesting he was already living modestly.

Erwin's journey involves a navigation in a complex emotional landscape where different value systems (values of other people and even his own values) can be in opposition with each other. Those different value systems shape our sense of identity, such as being a good parent, and being an involved citizen through our work and after-work implications. It requires a constant negotiation between the different aspects of his life and prioritization. Priorities always fluctuate depending on wherever someone is in their journey. By letting go a certain amount of control, Erwin was able to be in control of his emotional state. One constant element that was said to have helped him regulate his emotion was working within the SSE (lines 8-9). He explains that "c'est pas la job qui gère nos émotions, on le dit beaucoup là, mais, ça l'a grandement aidé" (lines 10-11) Since it is not the job's job to manage our emotions, a statement that he presents as a conventional wisdom ("on le dit beaucoup là"), it suggests that a part of agency is to being able to manage it, but that can only go so far. Navigating through his career transition, Erwin faces multiple contradiction and paradoxes. Through his linguistic nuances and mitigation statements, he is able to harmonize to some extent diverse aspects of his life.

7.1.4. Summary

Erwin represents his previous self during college time as someone lacking agency. This lack of agency takes form by recounting himself as not knowing where he was going and by saying that his interest in sport A was the motivating factor behind his study program. This rationale is downplayed by Erwin. Career goal is not part of his recollection of his younger self's discourse. His younger self is constructed as unaware, passive, and lost on that regard. On the other hand, this lack of agency is not necessarily presented negatively as it is said to have naturally led him towards the SSE.

Although he distances himself from his previous work within the traditional private sector, he identifies aspects that he enjoyed about his work that aligned with his value system. This emphasis on characteristics that aligns with his value system serves to bridge the gap between his past work and his current work within the SSE. By presenting the traditional private sector as somehow in contradiction with the SSE in their value system, it can make us believe that this career transition

may appear out of character, and that it may not seem genuine. Through distancing himself and enumerating the human aspects he enjoyed from his past experiences, it portrays Erwin's transition as genuine and authentic. An element of continuity in his career path is then present in his narration.

When Erwin speaks about having discovered the SSE explicitly for the first time, he expresses that it was a "coup de cœur". His following description of his journey presents him as emotionally engaged with the ideas and values that the SSE transpires. Using strong adverbs and active voice, he positions himself as more committed than before. It signals a higher level of agency in his career path construction. Paradoxically, he still mentions that he didn't choose to go in that direction and personified the career in SSE as an entity that attracted him. This paradox rather reinforces the idea that Erwin's agency was not performed through planned and deliberated decisions, but through acceptance and embracement of his deeper values. It portrays a nuanced view of agency that is less about making active choices, but aligning with a path that naturally fits his personal and moral values.

Interestingly, when Erwin speaks about the time he became aware about the SSE, he turns himself into the subject of influence of the SSE where he had to let go of control. His interests were the source of influence on his choices, and he let himself being pulled by them. It suggests a lack of resistance, but this positions him as authentically attracted to the SSE. His mother's quote about letting the water flow under the bridge, summarizes this discourse surrounding control and resistance. By agreeing, Erwin constructs an identity that is flexible, open to change, and authentic. Even if the topic of emotions was introduced by me during the interview, the aspect of stability and peace is used to reinforce the genuineness of his transition.

As he identifies himself as belonging to the side of the SSE, Erwin exposes self-restraint when speaking about people working in the traditional private sector. He presents a worry of having to nuance the contrast between these two sectors and to not take moral grandstanding. The interpretative repertoire of respecting the uniqueness of each individual's path is used to make the case. This may be an attempt to not undermine his credibility by appearing biased or unable to consider both sides of the perspective, and to present himself as acknowledging others' agency and freedom. He does so by distancing himself from appearing judgemental by saying "j'ai pas dit

‘Ah c’est pas un bon modèle’”. He uses praises, but he still, nonetheless, takes a stance by critiquing the profit motive.

To position himself as belonging to the SSE, he presents the values transpired by that sector and explains that those values fit within his value system. By doing so, Erwin compares the SSE to other sectors by suggesting that it is more than only providing a job to others, meeting our own needs. There’s a dilemma of trying to not judge others’ autonomy to choose their own path by positioning himself within the SSE as he implicitly presents a hierarchy of values through his discourse when asked to compare his experiences.

On the theme of his upbringing, Erwin evokes the element of luck that allowed him to forge his own path. He uses the concept of psychological mechanism of projection deployed by parents as a source of influence that may impede on a child’s agency to follow their voice. In his case, he claims to be lucky that his familial situation made it so that he did not get the pressure generated by this psychological mechanism from his parents which would have obliged him to make his own decision. It creates a discourse where the sense of agency is both present and downplayed as he was not entirely free from external circumstances.

The career transition is not without hiccups as Erwin highlights life roles that may be in opposition with the SSE. A combative vocabulary is used to emphasize this struggle of parenthood, specifically about the financial security associated with raising a family. In his situation, it was not said to have impacted him since him changing career path did not change his lifestyle unlike others who may have to adjust their lifestyle.

Overall, Erwin’s career narrative illustrates a complex degree of agency, both present and absent, as he navigates through various stages of his professional life towards aligning his values with the SSE. He initially portrays a lack of agency, being influenced by external factors, when he entered college, and when his story evolved into the moral landscape, agency became more apparent, although it is downplayed. Agency is not presented as being about making conscious choices, but about aligning his path that naturally fits with his intrinsic values. By reconciling his past experiences within the private sector with his current work in the SSE, Erwin demonstrates a genuine and authentic transition, an identity reinforced using the discourse of emotional engagement. There is also a worry and care to respect others’ perspective, but it proved to be a

dilemma to remain neutral as his comparison between the SSE and the traditional private sector involves a moral judgment.

7.1.5. Table summary of subject positions

Subject positions	Examples	Interpretations
Not a chooser	E6: J'peux pas dire j'ai choisi. J'pense c'est la carrière qui m'a choisi	Presents his career path as circumstances that were out of his control that led him to the SSE. It suggests little agency over his decisions.
Helpful	E12: j'ai toujours aimé conseiller, servir les gens et les aider. C'est sûr que là j'suis rentré dans un contexte entrepreneurial, mais j'aimais quand même ça servir mes clients, j'aimais ça m'assurer que tout allait bien avec les fournisseurs	Values the aspects of helping other in his previous work within the traditional private sector. It constructs an element of continuity between his past and present, which legitimize his career transition and positions him as having humanistic values.
Careful to not generalize	E20: [...] t'sais les gens dans le privé... j- je ferai attention à ne pas trop généraliser, mais ce qu'on voit t'sais c'est des gens, t'sais t'as divers niveaux, de de type de gens dans le privé. T'sais t'as des gens qui sont on parle travailleurs autonomes, des gens qui veulent juste créer leur propre emploi, qui veulent avoir la flexibilité, qui veulent faire les choses à leur façon t'sais. Ça ça je trouve ça quelque part très louable pis j'ai j'ai t'sais, j'ai pas dit « Ah c'est pas un bon modèle », c'est c'est, encore là c'est un cheminement très personnel.	Tries to distance himself from judgmental statements. It positions him as considerate and respectful towards individual freedom to choose their own path.
Attracted by the SSE	E56 : [...] Mais, malgré tous ces hauts et ces bas-là ben, le le côté économie sociale, l'entrepreneuriat social m'a toujours attiré [...]	Expressing that despite variation in his emotions, the constant element was his attraction towards the SSE. It presents the interest for the social element as deeply rooted within him and genuine.
Loyal towards the SSE	E56 : [...] C'est pour ça je te disais je pourrais pas faire autre chose, si je trahirai mes valeurs, je vais retomber encore dans les fluctuations que j'ai vécu dans trentaine. J'ai pas du tout le goût t'sais. [...]	By saying that doing something else than SSE would be to betray his values, he presents himself as strongly committed. It is also a statement of accountability towards his values.
Having a dilemma of living by his value despite his familial obligations	E58 : [...] c'était un peu cette recherche de comment est-ce que je peux vivre selon mes valeurs, mais en même temps j'ai des obligations personnelles, t'sais, familiales, fait qu'il y avait un peu ce combat là, [...]	The combative element puts in opposition his goal to live according to his values and his familial role. In his case, it was presented as being a bit of an impedance in his career path.
Lucky to somehow having to take things in his own hand	E76: moi j'étais chanceux j'ai un peu dû forger mon propre chemin là, mon contexte personnel à moi là t'sais, j'étais un enfant de parents divorcés, pis ça a pas toujours été facile, mais, fait que j'avais pas tant des pressions de bord pis de l'autre t'sais, [...] Fait que j'étais j'ai j'ai dû vraiment faire mes propres choix.	Says he was lucky that had to forge his own path. Having to make his own choices demonstrates agency, but the obligation and chance element downplays how much agency he really has.

7.2. Dina

Dina has a background in business school specialized in finance. At that time after she graduated, she considered herself as having neoliberal beliefs. Her first work experiences were in financial communications for an agency in France that had big enterprises and publicly traded companies as clients. She's had many other opportunities also in financial communications within the telecommunication industry right before the dot-com bubble where she eventually got fired. At that time, she was a mother of two children. Few years later, she's had some form of burnout which led to take a skill assessment quiz. It made her realized that she was working in the wrong type of environments that did not correspond to her values. Then she worked in biotech firms.

In the meantime, the 2008, 2011 happened. During those times, she worked on different projects that interested her through her network and that's where he discovered the idea of social innovation. Then the COVID pandemic hit. Experiencing all these crises and underdelivering companies where she worked made her question her beliefs. She felt stuck at some point due to her circumstances and decided with her daughter to leave her country to come to Montreal and chose a social innovation management program at a university.

7.2.1. *Early career*

When describing her career path, Dina begins with providing the type of program she studied in and the work experiences she has had afterward:

1 **D4 Dina** : Euum, ben moi, j'ai fait une formation, euh, business school, euh, avec une spécialisation
2 en finance. Euum, j'étais diplômée en ## et en fait, j'ai commencé à travailler, donc moi j'ai travaillé
3 toujours dans la communication financière que j'ai commencé à travailler dans une agence à Ville A,
4 euh, qui faisait de la communication financière donc j'ai travaillé, euh, pour les entreprises
5 essentiellement, les entreprises cotées comme client ou des des grosses entreprises, euh, et puis j'ai eu
6 l'occasion de faire l'introduction en bourse de la Compagnie A [...]. Donc c'était notre client, je
7 travaillais un an pour eux et après ça ils m'ont embauché. Donc j'ai travaillé # ans pour eux comme
8 salarié #-# ans, je sais plus et à ce moment-là, euh, j'ai eu mon premier enfant et mon mari avait une
9 opportunité de partir à Ville C. Donc on a dit « super, on part à Ville C » et là j'ai pas vraiment eu le
10 temps de souffler, j'ai été recrutée pour faire de la communication financière dans une entreprise Ville
11 C-aise et donc ça, c'était juste au moment de l'éclatement de la bulle Internet, donc c'était une
12 entreprise qui avait qui était dans le, dans la tech, dans la téléphonie, l'internet, tu vois en 2001, donc
13 c'était, qu'avait connu l'euphorie euh et et puis qui se prenait de plein fouet l'éclatement de la bulle et
14 qui avait pas mal de problèmes financiers et j'ai travaillé pendant # ans pour cette boîte... où ça a été
15 très intense. [...]

Dina's way of describing her previous work experience is quite limited in detail. Her way of presenting is straightforward as no emphasis is given to her emotions (yet) and most of the description is showcasing her individual agency due to her frequent use of action verbs such as "j'ai travaillé" and "j'ai fait". Even when her husband presented his opportunity to go to another city, her use of "on a dit" (line 9) suggests that she took part of the decision to leave. At the same time, she quickly enumerates the different work she took, which gives the representation of her as being always on the go. This representation is made more apparent after she comments through the expression "là j'ai pas vraiment eu le temps de souffler" (lines 9-10) which also conveys a sense of being extremely busy and having little time to rest. Her experiences kept accumulating during the period of the dot-com bubble where she worked in a telecommunication Compagnie. She describes that her time there was very intense (lines 14-15) and once more, not much explicit insight is given about her emotions and interior world. In this period of her career, her narrative reflects the valorisation of professional experience without much consideration to how she felt. It is important to note that it was early in the interview, which may have influenced the depth of the details she provided so she would be able to dedicate more time into the main topic, which was about her career transition.

As we can observe later, after Dina moved to Ville C and got fired, she begins to look back on her previous experiences with more judgment and introspection:

1 **D4 Dina** : [...] Euh, donc je suis arrivé à Ville C, j'avais un bébé 3 mois, tu vois, je commençais à
2 travailler et et euhh, quand ils m'ont virée, euh, j'avais un 2e bébé qui avait 6 mois, 9 mois peut-être,
3 euh, et et en fait, ils m'ont licenciée, euh... Donc j'avais ## ans... et en gros, euh, j'avais fait une
4 forme de burn-out... que je voyais pas vraiment, si tu veux, mais j'avais enduré pendant très
5 longtemps, en fait pis après ça, j'ai fait un bilan de compétences, et j'ai compris que... j'avais travaillé
6 dans un environnement qui correspondait pas du tout à mes valeurs et je m'étais jamais posé cette
7 question-là avant, tu vois, jamais personne n'avait parlé de valeur, euh... C'était pas quelque chose que
8 ce n'étais pas un concept que je j'imaginai que je prenais en compte. Tu vois ça... c'était tout
9 nouveau pour moi de réfléchir comme ça et et c'est à ce moment-là que j'ai vu qu'effectivement, euh,
10 j'avais fait plein de choses dans cette boîte, j'ai appris plein de choses, mais que fondamentalement, il
11 y avait quelque chose qui était très très distinct de moi... et euhm... et que donc, c'était plutôt très
12 bien que je sois parti en fait j'étais restée trop longtemps. [...]

Having a baby is said to be exhausting and emotionally draining, and by bringing the fact that she had a 6- or 9-month baby when her company fired her during the dot-com bubble, it presents the situation she went through as quite difficult and unfortunate for raising a child. It also presents the company as unsympathetic as she mentions twice that her company fired her, before and after

she says that she had a baby. She then talks about the burnout she experienced but downplays its impact by saying that it was “une forme de burn-out”. Also, she paints her past self as unaware about herself (such as her values, and desires as we will see later), but not fully unaware. This observation begins to be apparent when she says that she didn’t “really” see the burnout, meaning that she was vaguely aware of it or did not fully express the significance of that event. The perception of being less in tune with herself is also accentuated when she mentions that she never thought about matching her values with her work environment (lines 4-9). Not doing so may have contributed to her feeling of burnout. She did not even realize that she was instinctively taking into consideration her values as we can see by her use of the past tense in this sentence: “c’était pas quelque chose [...] pas un concept que je j’imaginai que je prenais en compte” (lines 7-8). It was at that moment that she saw that something didn’t line up within her (lines 9-11).

Furthermore, Dina expresses that “jamais personne n’avait parlé de valeur” (to her), which suggests that this idea of values was not part of her upbringing, so there is an element of indirect blaming on that regard. If she was not conscious about the importance of values, we could ask ourselves “where do those values come from”, “what are those values”, and “why is the notion of values brought up”? Some of the values she had were to be proactive and to learn, but it was not enough to fulfill her. These values are presented by contrasting with a “but” statement: “j’avais fait plein de choses dans cette boîte, j’ai appris plein de choses, mais que fondamentalement, il y avait quelque chose qui était très très distinct de moi”. Doing and learning is regarded as a positive aspect of a career in our culture that values business (being busy and proactive) and learning, but something was still missing for Dina. As we will see later, she still values these aspects of work, but they need to be supported by another factor.

In the following extract that is part of the same monologue of the previous extract, Dina goes more in detail of her interests and desires when it comes to work conditions as well as her involvement within the community. A more negative outlook is given regarding her previous workplaces even if she says that she was more involved within the work she took after her burnout. Her discontentment in those post-burn-out work is a story about deception, and disillusion, but also one about figuring out what she believed in and wants:

- 1 **D4 Dina** : [...] Et comme j’étais à Ville C et que j’avais un métier très particulier, que je voulais pas
- 2 aller travailler dans euh dans une agence de com (communication), à faire des choses plus standards

3 qui m'intéressaient pas et comme, euh, je voulais pas retrouver un job avec une telle intensité, j'ai
 4 commencé pour comme consultante... et donc j'ai été consultant pendant une #aine d'années.
 5 Euhm, j'ai jamais été un consultant très intensif, tu vois, moi, j'ai toujours, j'ai j'ai bossé de manière,
 6 modérée, euh, pendant ce temps-là, j'ai fait un tas d'autres choses. j'ai eu mes enfants, j'ai été engagée
 7 comme déléguée de parents d'élèves à l'école, je me suis engagée dans beaucoup de choses, euh, et
 8 donc, en parallèle, j'ai travaillé pas mal pour des boîtes de dans les biotechnologies, euh, donc sur des
 9 sujets auxquels j'ai beaucoup cru, la recherche de médicaments contre le cancer, le développement de
 10 biocarburant propre, donc j'ai beaucoup travaillé, beaucoup, communiqué, beaucoup investi d'énergie
 11 et finalement, au-delà de moi, je peux pas dire que ce soit des boîtes qui ont vraiment délivré ce
 12 qu'elles avaient promis. Entre-temps, on a dû se taper la crise de 2008. Puis la crise de 2011, euh, puis
 13 y'a eu, euh, la COVID. Et avant la COVID en fait, par, par relation personnelle et par intérêt, je me
 14 suis retrouvée à travailler sur des projets qui étaient différents de ce que je faisais d'habitude. Et c'est
 15 la première fois que j'ai découvert l'idée de l'innovation sociale. Et c'est la première fois que je me
 16 suis dit que je pouvais faire des choses, mettre mon intelligence au service de choses qui me de projets,
 17 que je trouvais plus excitants, plus utile, plus, voilà, avec une plus grande utilité sociale... [...]

After being aware that something within her was distinct and not matching with her values, she gained more insights into what she was interested in and not interested in. She mentions that she did not want to do “des choses plus standards qui [l]’intéressaient pas” and did not want to live through the same work intensity she experienced (lines 2-3). Even if she considers herself as working moderately hard, she proceeds to talk about her multiple engagements in other areas of her life such as being a parent, getting involved as a representative of students’ parents at school (lines 5-7). But there’s a seemingly contradiction to her perception of being a moderate worker by explaining that she worked a lot for biotechnology firms and invested a lot of energy into these companies. The common elements between those involvements does not appear to be about work for the sole purpose of the virtue of hard-working as suggested by the Protestant ethics explained by Emile Durkheim, but rather about being involved towards finality she believes in. Her search for meaning can be noted using the verb “engagé” and by working “sur des sujets auxquels [elle a] beaucoup cru, la recherche de médicaments contre le cancer, le développement de biocarburant propre”. Work in and of itself is not enough, it needs to be supported by a meaning of social utility (line 17).

From that extract, there is an evolution of her career development. She now knows what she is interested in, and what she wants to work towards. She chose in consequence to work in companies that had a mission of curing cancer, and developing green technology (lines 9-10), but once more, she was faced with disappointment as they did not deliver on their promises (lines 12-13). This unpleasant event led her to an unexpected turn as “[elle s’est] retrouvée à travailler sur des projets qui étaient différents de ce qu[’elle] faisai[t] d’habitude” (lines 13-14). To “find herself” suggests

there's an element of chance event occurring, but she does not present herself as lacking awareness or agency as her choice of trying something new was still related to her interest and the contacts from her personal relationship. That's when she first discovered the idea of social innovation. A journey of self-discovery is representative of the last part of this extract by saying that “[elle s’est] retrouvée à travailler sur” and “[a] découvert l’idée de l’innovation sociale” (lines 13-15). This journey implies finding her interests, values, and beliefs.

Dina's change of belief occurs after the multiple discontentment from her previous experiences. From that point, she was looking to seek the next opportunity that is fitting with the progression of her career path:

1 **D4 Dina** : [...] Euh, et puis euhm, je me sentais vraiment coincée, tu vois. Et en fait, euh, ce qui a fait
2 que ça s'est décoincé c'est que euh, un moment avec ma fille on a dit « Ben on va partir »... eet et je
3 savais pas tellement comment m'expatrier en étant consultant freelance, tu vois. C'est difficile
4 d'arriver quelque part, alors déjà pour immigrer en disant « Bonjour, j'arrive, je suis consultant
5 freelance » à ## ans, tu te dis bon, euh, difficile de de faire le saut, enfin en tout cas, difficile d'avoir
6 des papiers. Et et c'est là, quand j'ai cherché une formation pour reprendre des études que la formation
7 d'innovation sociale, je me suis dit « C'est exactement ça que qui va bien avec la suite de de mon
8 parcours. » ... Et et tu vois quand j'ai candidaté, ce que j'ai dit, c'est que voilà, quand je suis sortie de
9 l'école, j'étais néolibérale, je croyais à la construction européenne, c'était la réunification allemande,
10 c'était super le le, le communisme était mort, tu vois, j'ai j'ai, j'ai été à Berlin juste avant un an avant
11 la chute du mur, donc quand j'ai vu la chute du mur c'était vraiment très très émouvant, euhm,
12 franchement, la construction européenne, on y croyait, tu vois, et, et et j'ai été capable de t'expliquer
13 en quoi la bourse ça pouvait être un super levier pour le développement des entreprises et, et, et que
14 c'était pas que un monde capitaliste spéculateur. Et puis écoute, après 25 ans, 3 crises, donc on m'a dit
15 à chaque fois que c'était la plus grosse crise depuis 1929 (dix-neuf-cent-vingt-neuf) et l'état du monde,
16 euh, j'ai évolué [rires]... J'ai remis en question mes points de vue [rires].

Dina says that she felt stuck in her journey and proceeds to provide some reasons as to why it was difficult for her to take the next steps, but for her, by saying that it was “difficile de de faire le saut” (line 5), it suggests that the gap of uncertainty felt bigger than a single step. For example, she says that she did not really know how to expatriate herself as a freelance consultant and bringing up the difficulty of getting the immigration papers. She also evokes her age (line 5) to accentuate the difficulty of making the jump. Bringing her age suggests certain expectations of where someone should be at a certain point in their life. The solution she found was to apply for a program in social innovation to which she quotes herself in the past saying “C'est exactement ça que qui va bien avec la suite de de mon parcours” (lines 7-8). After mentioning about her application to the program, she brings up the concept of neoliberalism and communism which implies a conversation about ideology. She used to be able to explain arguments in favour of the

stock market and that it wasn't only a capitalist speculative belief, which suggests that she did have a certain restraint when it comes to the idea of capitalism, but she no longer believes those narratives. After three economic crises where she has been told that it was the biggest crisis, she says that she evolved, which shows a gradual shift. She already had a restraint from speculative activities, but concerning the aspects that she believed in capitalism, by bringing up what other people were telling her about the system every time after each crisis, it portrays the situation as a form of delusion by believing in those stories which led her to question her beliefs as the situation did not seem to get better. It also positions herself as a person able to reassess her worldview based on information that does not line-up with the expected outcome.

7.2.2. Interest isn't enough and values

In the following extract, I prompted Dina to further back in her early career, before starting to work, to explain what brought her to study in finance. The reasons she provides about early motives were highly based on her interests:

- 1 **D7 Kenny:** [...] initialement, qu'est-ce qui t'avais amené à au domaine financier parce que aussi tu
- 2 disais avec le temps, ben, t'as t'as cru au marché boursier et tout ça, est-ce que c'était, ben, on va peut-
- 3 être répondre plus à la première question parce que c'est c'est comment tu t'es mis à choisir le ...
- 4 **D8 Dina:** Je suis arrivée aux études de business, euh, un peu par hasard et un peu par intérêt, c'est à
- 5 dire que, quand j'étais au lycée en France, un peu l'équivalent du cégep, on avait des cours
- 6 d'économie, et ça, c'est vraiment ce qui m'a intéressé, c'était les cours d'économie. C'était que, ça me
- 7 permettait de comprendre le monde, euh, je trouvais vraiment très très intéressant. Et puis comme j'ai
- 8 fait de l'économie, un bac économie, et que j'étais bonne, on m'a orienté vers le système un peu élite à
- 9 la française, donc classe préparatoire et qu'avec un cursus économique tu vas faire classe préparatoire
- 10 pour école de commerce. Donc j'ai fait école de commerce et en école de commerce j'avais le choix,
- 11 hein, euh j'ai pris finance parce que... ça me semblait plus rationnel. [...]

First, Dina brings up multiple times the topic of interest when it comes to her career choices. How she decided to go to business school was due to her interest which suggests the agency to act towards her preferences, but this sentiment of full agency over her desire is slightly downplayed by saying that it was “un peu par hasard” that she went to business school (line 4). She did not have control over which courses she would have at the lycée and turns out she was interested by her economics courses. Then, she explains that “on [l]’a orienté vers le système (éducatif) un peu élite à la française” (lines 8-9) which positions her in the passive voice. Even if she mentions that she had the choice to go to business school (line 10), the sense of lack of agency seems to suggest

the limited amount of choice that was presented to her. This lack of choice is presented through the explanation that the preparatory classes of the French educational elite system only had the economic curriculum (line 9). Dina may appear to have recognized in her discourse the paradox of agency as she did have freedom to choose, but she did not have control over the choices that were presented to her and what these choices implied. Nonetheless, she still chose and enjoyed the path in finance.

When Dina speaks about the reasons for choosing to go into finance, she explains that it was the decision that “[lui] semblait plus rationnel” (line 11). Uncertainty is introduced by saying it “seemed” that it could be explained by her doubt about whether finance is as rational as she thought it was in hindsight. There is also the possibility that it suggests a choice less motivated by intrinsic interest. She then provides reasons as to why she was interested in finance which brought value judgment:

1 **D8 Dina:** [...] Et, et ce que j’ai toujours aimé dans mon métier, c’était, euh, ce que j’ai j’aime la j’aime
2 bien, la finance, mais j’ai aucune aucun intérêt à la production de chiffres. Ça m’emmerde
3 profondément. Tu vois, moi, j’ai jamais fait de compta, de contrôle, de gestion, d’audit, ça
4 m’intéressait pas du tout quoi. Je comprends bien ce que ça fait, je comprends bien à quoi ça sert, j’ai
5 travaillé avec des gens qui le font, mais moi, ça m’intéresse pas. Moi, ce qui m’intéresse, c’est de
6 donner du sens aux chiffres... et c’est de mettre les chiffres en rapport avec c’est quoi l’histoire de
7 l’entreprise... Euh, et hmm, et ce qui est important c’est que pour moi c’était que les chiffres se
8 retrouvent dans l’histoire et réciproquement... Tu vois par rapport à ce que je percevais, qui était assez
9 fou, hein, mais du marketing et de la communication plus générale, c’était que tu pouvais raconter un
10 tas de trucs, euh, qui étaient pas vrai, euh, alors que en communication financière si tu disais un truc et
11 que tes chiffres disaient le contraire, ça marchait pas, ça se voyait tout de suite. Ouais bon c’était un
12 peu simpliste comme analyse, je pense que je serais plus nuancée mais voilà, euhm, et dans un sens et
13 dans l’autre c’est bien que je pense qu’on peut raconter des tas d’histoires avec des chiffres qui sont
14 pas vrais et puis qu’on peut avoir une communication qui est intègre et honnête, et que si on l’a pas, de
15 toute façon ça finit par se voir aussi [rires]. Euhm, donc voilà comment je suis arrivée à faire de la
16 finance et je suis arrivée à faire en fait j’suis arrivée à faire de la communication financière [...]

When she continued to speak about finance, she says that “[elle] aime bien, la finance” (lines 1-2) it which is not as strong as saying that she loved it or that it was a passion of hers. But as she digs deeper into her interests, she mentions some aspects of finance that she was particularly interested in. Those aspects are to give meaning to numbers and to put them in relation to the story of an enterprise. By getting into the specifics, moral and value judgment began to take place within her discourse which circles back to her negative experiences that led her to change careers. For her, it was important for the numbers to be consistent with the stories and the stories to line up with the numbers (lines 7-8). She goes on to say that in marketing and communication in general,

there is the possibility to make untrue statements that do not correspond to reality (lines 9-11). She then summarizes the essence of those sentiments by qualifying her task in communication as having integrity and honesty (line 14). By the sequences of those three statements, one about what's important to her within her field, one counterexample of a good approach, and a moral descriptive of a good approach, Dina positions herself as someone that is speaking up against questionable practices within her field of interest.

I then reiterate on Dina's explanation on what she enjoyed from her work and the field of economics (having a global perspective, a vision on governance, strategy, logistics, etc.) and what other parts of her job that she did not enjoy, and she rectifies on my interpretation of her preferences:

- 1 **D9 Kenny:** Hmm, alors le travail t'a, ben ça satisfait un peu le côté de de analyser, de voir
- 2 globalement, mais ça a pas satisfait l'autre côté qui est de d'être plus hands-on si on veut dire.
- 3 **D10 Dina:** Je sais pas si je l'avais ce côté-là tu vois. Je pense que si je suis restée là c'est aussi parce
- 4 que ça m'allait j'aimais bien d'être dans cette fonction là et aussi parce que bah du coup c'est c'est
- 5 on m'a reconnu de la valeur sur ça par contre, ma capacité d'analyse, de synthèse, de de et de
- 6 construction de sens, vraiment d'arriver à dire, de prendre un tas de choses et de dire voilà, moi je peux
- 7 arriver je peux vous je vous propose qu'on raconte l'histoire comme ça. Et du coup, d'être capable de
- 8 la raconter et d'être capable d'être convaincant. J'ai, j'ai, j'ai aussi cette capacité à être convaincant.
- 9 Mais ça m'a ça me ça m'oblige à être convaincue. Voilà, c'est c'est, c'est, c'est c'est là que je reviens
- 10 aux valeurs, c'est un truc vraiment important que tu veux raconter une histoire à laquelle je ne crois
- 11 pas, je n'y arrive pas, je suis profondément malheureuse. Et je pense que c'est, c'est l'autre manière de
- 12 raconter mon problème de valeur et de burnout, c'est qu'un moment, j'étais profondément malheureuse
- 13 de raconter une histoire à laquelle je ne croyais plus. J'y ai cru à un moment, euh, et à un moment j'y ai
- 14 plus cru.

When reflecting on the reasons why she stayed at her previous job, she vocalizes that it was the recognition she received for her skills. But there was uncertainty as to whether it was really because of that recognition she stayed by starting her explanation with "je pense" (line 3). Remembering a decision made in the past is done through the current perspective one has, which is not always the most representative of the thought process at that time. In this case, regardless of the reasons provided, she gives recognition to her communications and persuasion skills ("je peux" (lines 6-7), "j'ai aussi cette capacité à" (line 8)). But alone, her capabilities are not enough to satisfy her. There needs to be a coherence between the stories she is telling and to be convinced by the stories itself (lines 8-9). This positions Dina as someone authentic and true to herself, seeking more than just success and recognition. There needs to be an alignment between her values and her narratives (to herself and to others). She makes it clear about this value alignment when she says

that this goes back to the topic of values, “c’est un truc vraiment important” (line 10) that if she tells a story that she doesn’t believe in, she will be profoundly unhappy (lines 9-11). Her quitting her work suggests that it’s not a failure due to a deficiency in her skills, but rather an insufficiency in her work to fulfill her personal values.

7.2.3. Foreteller

Dina is positions herself as critical of enterprises who continually changed their story to appeal to shareholders, but what she needed was someone who had a clear vision in their head. It did not matter if it was going against the current. While explaining herself, she recalls a story in the early 2000s where she gave a vision that seemed unbelievable, and how it was received by the others:

- 1 **D12 Dina:** [...] Je me souviens d’avoir raconté pendant des années à des banquiers qui avaient que des,
- 2 [...] Nokia 3310
- 3 [...]
- 4 **D14 Dina:** [...] Et donc je leur disais, voilà bientôt, avec votre téléphone, vous allez écouter de la
- 5 musique et vous allez recevoir des emails et vous allez prendre des photos. Et, et ils me croyaient
- 6 pas... Ça c’était 2000... 4, 2003, 2004. Le premier iPhone, c’est 2007, tu vois donc euh

Through that story, Dina positions herself as having a good vision, but at the same time, not being taken seriously by people with prestigious titles. By mentioning that the iPhone eventually came out in 2007 (which had the features she was foreseeing), it positions the bankers as being wrong. They were wrong since they did not believe her when she told them in the 2000s that eventually, they would be able to listen to music, receive emails and take photos with their phone. By providing an example of an instance where she was right and those who did not believe her, wrong, Dina is establishing a legitimacy for the visions she has for the future, and they are not so out of whack according to her story.

7.2.4. Summary

In the past, Dina is presented as very driven by her work and the way she speaks conveyed more agency and it portrayed her as a go-getter person. As time goes on, seeking mastery at what she does at work was not enough to fulfill her. There is a quest for authenticity and integrity from the setback she experienced.

Initially, around the period when she went to university and had her first job, her discourse is oriented towards discovering topics of interests at École A and being recognized for her skills. Those periods can be summarized as a search for finding interests and improving the competences related to those interests.

Then, after experimenting with different workplaces and living through unpleasant experiences such as getting fired and living through economic crises, skills and recognition became insufficient to satisfy her. Dina figured out aspects of work she like and dislike and seeks it at other workplaces. Aligning her values with her workplace environment became a bigger priority.

As these work experiences did not improve, for example, the enterprises where she worked since they underdelivered on their promises and sought profits above achieving their mission, Dina uses those examples as a counterexample of what she wants to pursue. These profit seeking tendencies were encapsulated under the belief system of capitalism which serves as a contrast to the SSE principles she seeks to embody within her career choices.

Throughout her narration, there are many elements of continuity between her past self and her current self, but also elements of discontinuity. Elements of continuity are tasks that she liked about her previous work environments (analyzing numbers, making sense of them, etc.), her interests in finance and elements of discontinuity are her neoliberal beliefs. More and more insight on herself was acquired over time, which allowed her to readjust her critical evaluation of her belief system. Her changed worldview puts a greater importance on social utility and having a work in adequation with her values rather than short-term gains.

Within this conversation on changing her worldview, Dina positions herself as being reflexive and having the critical thinking to question her own beliefs. When faced with repeated disappointments, such as a company's failure to fulfill its promises or the recurring economic crises like the dot-com bubble, 2008 and 2011 financial crashes, and the COVID pandemic, she uses those instances as a catalyst to reconsider her worldview. Instead of repeating and spreading the same stories of companies she worked at and risking investing her energy into what she considers failed venture or dead end, she justifies her shift in priorities using those companies' failures as examples to stray away from.

When it comes to how agency can be interpreted from Dina's discourse, there may be an illusion of agency early on in her career. She was not fully aware of all the actual choices that were present to her since her decisions were quite straightforward and followed a conventional path in business school. Paradoxically, as she discovers more about herself, her choices seem to be riddled with even more uncertainty even if she is striving towards a more specific goal of putting her energy into a work with greater purpose. She explains that what helped her deal with the negative emotions related to having more options and adventuring into the unknown was to embrace the uncertainty. By quoting other people telling her that it is courageous what she is doing, it presents the path towards the SSE as more unconventional with an unclear career progression which requires courage to undertake.

7.2.5. Table summary of subject positions

Subject positions	Examples	Interpretations
Person who worked a lot	<p>D4 : [...] donc moi j'ai travaillé toujours dans la communication financière que j'ai commencé à travailler dans une agence à Ville A, [...], et puis j'ai eu l'occasion de faire l'introduction en bourse de la Compagnie A [...] Donc j'ai travaillé # ans pour eux comme salarié #-# ans, je sais plus et à ce moment-là, euh, j'ai eu mon premier enfant et mon mari avait une opportunité de partir à Ville C. Donc on a dit « super, on part à Ville C » et là j'ai pas vraiment eu le temps de souffler [...]</p>	<p>In the context, Dina took one job after another and was presented as being constantly on the go in her career. Using multiple action verbs and enumerating her multiple jobs, she positions herself as being very focused on her career and not really stopping.</p>
Unaware about her values	<p>D4: [...] Donc j'avais ## ans... et en gros, euh, j'avais fait une forme de burn-out... que je voyais pas vraiment, si tu veux, mais j'avais enduré pendant très longtemps, en fait pis après ça, j'ai fait un bilan de compétences, et j'ai compris que... j'avais travaillé dans un environnement qui correspondait pas du tout à mes valeurs et je m'étais jamais posé cette question-là avant, tu vois, jamais personne n'avait parlé de valeur, [...]</p>	<p>Her past self was presented as unaware about what she values. Blame was implicitly attributed to her surrounding, which portrays her past as having little agency from being able to align her work with her value.</p>
Not an intense consultant, but engaged in other life roles	<p>D4: [...] je voulais pas aller travailler dans euh dans une agence de com (communication), à faire des choses plus standards qui m'intéressaient pas et comme, euh, je voulais pas retrouver un job avec une telle intensité, j'ai commencé pour comme consultante... et donc j'ai été consultant pendant une quinzaine d'années. Euhm, j'ai jamais été un consultant très intensif, tu vois, moi, j'ai toujours, j'ai j'ai bossé de manière, modérée, euh, pendant ce temps-là, j'ai fait un tas d'autres choses, j'ai eu mes enfants, j'ai été engagée comme déléguée de parents d'élèves à l'école, je me suis engagée dans beaucoup de choses [...]</p>	<p>For topics that interests Dina, she presents herself as very dedicated, involved and engaged. As for her work, she distances herself from being an intense consultant. It presents her as being aware of her interests and desires following her burn-out as she does not want to relive the same intensive job again. Her gained awareness will eventually lead her closer to the SSE.</p>
Disappointed, but then, excited	<p>D4: j'ai beaucoup travaillé, beaucoup, communiqué, beaucoup investi d'énergie et finalement, au-delà de moi, je peux pas dire que ce soit des boîtes qui ont vraiment délivré ce qu'elles avaient promis. [...] par relation personnelle et par intérêt, je me suis retrouvée à travailler sur des projets qui étaient différents de ce que je faisais d'habitude. Et c'est la première fois que j'ai découvert l'idée de l'innovation sociale. Et c'est la première fois que je me suis dit que je pouvais faire des choses, mettre mon intelligence au service de choses qui me de projets,</p>	<p>Her experience has been presented as disappointing as she does not feel like the promises were not delivered. It constructs a past self as jaded by her work. Eventually, an event led her to discover the SSE, and that was the moment she described as making her excited again since it allows her to put her energy to good use. It presents an identity as being motivated and interested towards doing societally useful work.</p>

	que je trouvais plus excitants, plus utile, plus, voilà, avec une plus grande utilité sociale... [...]	
Neoliberal, but then, evolved	D4: [...] quand j'ai candidaté, ce que j'ai dit, c'est que voilà, quand je suis sortie de l'école, j'étais néolibérale, je croyais à la construction européenne, c'était la réunification allemande, c'était super le le, le communisme était mort, tu vois, [...] Et puis écoute, après 25 ans, 3 crises, donc on m'a dit à chaque fois que c'était la plus grosse crise depuis 1929 (dix-neuf-cent-vingt-neuf) et l'état du monde, euh, j'ai évolué [rires]... J'ai remis en question mes points de vue [rires].	Her past self was described as a neoliberal person. She distanced herself from her belief since then by explaining that she evolved from those beliefs using historical crisis as a proof and justification as a sound reason to evolve. It presents her as not being delusional anymore for believing her past beliefs. Her new beliefs align better with the SSE.
Interested in economy, good at school and rational	D8: [...] on avait des cours d'économie, et ça, c'est vraiment ce qui m'a intéressé, c'était les cours d'économie. C'était que, ça me permettait de comprendre le monde, euh, je trouvais vraiment très très intéressant. Et puis comme j'ai fait de l'économie, un bac économie, et que j'étais bonne, on m'a orienté vers le système un peu élite à la française, [...] en école de commerce j'avais le choix, hein, euh j'ai pris finance parce que... ça me semblait plus rationnel. [...]	Her decisions are presented as being guided by rationality and interests. It constructs an identity that is curious about understanding the world. Within the context of the interview, she presented herself as having evolved by changing her belief, which constructs her as able to question herself and to learn more about the world.
Honest communicator	D10: [...] on m'a reconnu de la valeur sur ça par contre, ma capacité d'analyse, de synthèse, de de et de construction de sens, [...] d'être capable de la raconter et d'être capable d'être convaincant. J'ai, j'ai, j'ai aussi cette capacité à être convaincant. Mais ça m'a ça me ça m'oblige à être convaincue. Voilà, c'est c'est, c'est, c'est c'est là que je reviens aux valeurs, c'est un truc vraiment important que tu veux raconter une histoire à laquelle je ne crois pas, je n'y arrive pas, je suis profondément malheureuse Et je pense que c'est, c'est l'autre manière de raconter mon problème de valeur et de burnout, c'est qu'un moment, j'étais profondément malheureuse de raconter une histoire à laquelle je ne croyais plus. J'y ai cru à un moment, euh, et à un moment j'y ai plus cru.	Dina says that she has the capabilities to make sense of things and to tell stories and convince people. But by explaining that she needs to be convinced, it presents her as not deceptive and authentic as she would not be able to lie. In the context of the transition, it fits with her narrative of emotional unhappiness from her previous work (that she did not believe in anymore) and how the SSE gave her the motivation as she believes in the values it espouses.

7.3. Isabel

Isabel was supposed to attend business school when she was in France but did a master's in mathematics and statistics instead. Then she moved to another country to finish a degree in finance and marketing. When she began to work, she was in marketing research and was leaning towards data marketing. She worked in many industries such as retail, food industry, cosmetics, e-commerce, fashion scaling from the city level in Montreal to continental wide in North America. Throughout those experiences, she quickly climbed up the ladder towards the roles of vice-presidency in marketing.

Eventually, after progressing within her industry of interest in fashion, she realized the power that marketing has over people, their self-esteem, and their beliefs on what is considered beautiful. That is when she adopted practices of showing diversity within her marketing campaigns to include more body types, ethnicities, sexual orientations, etc. But then came her to another realization that what she was promoting throughout all this work is overconsumption which contributes to the environmental issue.

Isabel won awards for her work, which causes her some emotional distress as she realized that the better she does her work, the worse the planet becomes. These feelings led her to quit her work and seek opportunities more coherent with her new outlook in life. She then started her own non-profit. In the meantime, she has started her studies in sustainable development.

7.3.1. *Early career*

The outlines of Isabel's initial career path emphasises on a search to align her professional roles with her personal passions:

- 1 **I4 Isabel** : Euhm, mon parcours de carrière ben dans l'fond, moi, j'ai euhm euh moi, j'ai étudié en
- 2 France, j'suis venue finir mes études euh ici à Ville A à École A et euh j'ai commencé ma carrière
- 3 en consultation, en recherche et stratégie marketing. J'suis passée j'trouvais ça un petit peu difficile
- 4 d'être en consultation parce qu'on touche beaucoup, mais on touche à rien spécif- spécifiquement, on
- 5 est beaucoup dans la la stratégie, mais pas dans le détail. J'suis passée en alimentation, j'ai travaillé
- 6 chez Compagnie A, euh j'suis restée en alimentation, j'étais chez Compagnie B, donc ça c'tait
- 7 vraiment le début de ma carrière. Euhm donc vraiment euh des rôles de directrice marketing assez
- 8 rapidement. Euhm [tongue ticking] puis ben l'alimentation, c'tait pas euh ma plus grande passion dans
- 9 le fond euh et euh moi j'aime beaucoup la mode, donc j'suis, j'suis partie comme vice-président de
- 10 marketing chez Compagnie C, donc en cosmétique. Euhm et après, j'ai commencé dans l'fond les à
- 11 peu près les ## dernières années dans le commerce de détail fait que comme vice-président de arketing,
- 12 e-commerce, présentation visuelle j'ai commencé chez Compagnie D eu:h, de là j'suis passée chez

13 Compagnie E. J'suis allée chez Compagnie F et j'ai f- m- ma dernière expérience était chez
14 Compagnie G. Donc commerce des détails dans le monde Montréalais, québécois, mais toujours sur
15 soit l'ensemble du Canada, soit l'Amérique du Nord au complet avec Compagnie F, j'tais même en
16 Europe aussi, donc euh voilà.

Through the transitional tone of her storytelling by the use of the verbs “passer”, “rester”, which can minimize the impact these experiences had on her, Isabel presents an early career path that is focused more on a quest of personal interest alignment. It is subtly introduced by contrasting the pros and then the cons of her initial job in consulting by the juxtaposition using “but” to present the complexity of her career preferences and something was not satisfactory (lines 2-5) which led her to try something else. Interestingly, one advantage she presents about consulting contains the source of its disadvantage as a contradiction. For example, she says that in consulting, “qu'on touche beaucoup, mais on touche à rien spécif- spécifiquement” (line 4). In a more explicit way to explain her search for interest alignment, when speaking of the food industry, she says that it was not her biggest passion, that she liked fashion a lot, thus she left for another company in cosmetics (lines 8-10). In the broader discourse, one part of the work fulfillment adage is to follow your passion and you will never work a day in your life. This adage summarizes the essence of her early career decisions.

Agency can be observed by Isabel's use of the verbs in the active voice: “j'ai étudié” (line 1), “j'suis passé” (line 3), “j'ai travaillé” (line 6), etc. She also comments that in her early career, she got to marketing director roles quickly (lines 7-8). In a conventional career path where one is expected to climb up the corporate ladder, Isabel was able to achieve those milestones. By mentioning the titles she had, she identified herself with the professional roles she previously held.

That part of her career was also an exploratory phase since there was an interest in discovering the different industries as well as seeking work opportunities:

- 1 **I7 Kenny:** OK. Et est-ce que c- quand vous avez commencé à faire la consultation, c'est quoi qui
- 2 vous avait attiré, est-ce que c'était euh par rapport à aux données euh par rapport...
- 3 **I8 Isabel:** Oui, c'est ça...
- 4 **I9 Kenny:** ...au à l'aspect marketing?
- 5 **I10 Isabel:** ... mais c'était c'était le fait qu'en que j'pouvais à l'origine, c'qui m'a attiré là-dedans,
- 6 c'était le fait que j'pouvais toucher plusieurs industries, donc découvrir plusieurs industries euhm
- 7 et et pouvoir travailler à la stratégie parce que c'est toujours pareil quand on rentre dans une
- 8 entreprise, surtout directement après l'école, des fois on peut se retrouver à faire euh un peu tout et
- 9 n'importe quoi finalement, mais pas nécessairement être impliqué dans le côté stratégique, donc là, je
- 10 trouvais ça intéressant. J'étais chez Compagnie H, donc c'était une firme vraiment en stratégie.

- 11 Euhm mais c'tait ça, c'était l'idée de toucher plusieurs industries parce que quand on sort de l'école,
12 c'est difficile de savoir (pause ou bug dans Zoom) dans quelle industrie on va travailler vraiment.

With the timeline anchor point of “à l’origine” (line 5), Isabel situates her reasoning of going into consultation within the specific context of her early career. At the same time, it provides a moment of reference where there would be an evolution of motivations behind her choices. This decision is then rationalized and justified by an external condition that would put her in a difficult position which impacted her choice. In this case, the reason provided is that after finishing school, “c’est difficile de savoir [...] dans quelle industrie on va travailler vraiment” (lines 11-12). By presenting the difficulty of knowing which industry to work in after graduating, and that statement being the justification for the initial choice, it constructs an image of her past self as unaware of what industry she was interested in. It may suggest that her choice was not made with all her intent, which creates a distance from her current self. On the other hand, she does not express discontentment about making that initial choice to become a consultant.

In the meantime, her rationale appears to be about seeking work opportunities that allowed her to progress in her career:

- 1 **I11 Kenny:** Mh hm. Alors à travers cette expérience, ça vous a permis de de trouver d’autres euh
2 d’autres industries qui t’intéressaient.
3 **I12 Isabel:** Exactement exactement. Fait que c’est là que j’s’passée à en alimentation, puis surtout à
4 cette époque là, euhm la bière, c’était vraiment le marché où y’avait beaucoup beaucoup de budget
5 marketing dans le fond, y’avait beaucoup de choses à faire. Euhm donc donc c’tait vraiment
6 intéressant, y’avait vraiment une école de pensée, une façon de faire, j’ai beaucoup appris là pendant
7 ces années-là.

By mentioning that there are “y’avait beaucoup beaucoup de budget” (line 4) in marketing within the beer industry, that “y’avait beaucoup de choses à faire” (line 5), and that “[elle a] beaucoup appris là pendant ces années-là” (line 6), the sequence of providing the context, then detailing the implication of that context, and finally explaining the advantages for taking the opportunity in that context, Isabel justifies once more the logic behind her past choice. The choices she made were dependent on career advancement and work opportunities.

After asking about what made her second-guess her career choice before going towards the SSE, she explains that, as she advanced in her career, she began to realize the impact of her work on other people. Upon this realization, she took action in order to have a positive societal impact:

1 **I18 Isabel:** Ouais, en fait, euhm [tongue tick], au fur et à mesure que j'ai progressé dans ma carrière,
2 j'ai comme réalisé, surtout en travaillant avec des marques euh nationales et internationales, euh le
3 pouvoir dans le fond, qu'on les gens de marketing sur les sur les les gens. Moi, j'étais dans la mode,
4 puis euh j'trouvais rapidement, j'ai voulu travailler beaucoup en diversité, en inclusion dans la mode
5 quand j'ai commencé chez Compagnie D, on a été les premiers à signer la charte de non-retouche des
6 mannequins, euhm parce que euh j'ai vite réalisé à quel point l'image qu'on projetait sur les
7 magazines, l'image qu'on projetait dans nos boutiques, si j'mettais des à l'époque, c'était vraiment la
8 mode d'avoir des filles filiformes, blanches euh avec un certain type de beauté finalement, euhm pis
9 que là, j'me suis rendu compte, ben, l'impact que ça a hein, négatif, dans le fond, sur la croyance
10 populaire, l'identité sociale qu'on se fait autour de qu'est-ce qui est beau, qui est beau et à quoi, on doit
11 ressembler. Donc euh ça c'est rapidement, pis parce que dans la mode, c'était beaucoup le sujet à ce
12 moment-là, moi j'ai beaucoup travaillé, euhm que ce soit dans toutes les autres marques où j'ai été
13 jusqu'à ce que je sois chez Compagnie G a montrer des femmes de tout corps, de toutes origines
14 culturelles, euh de toutes orientations sexuelles, de tous âges aussi, donc toutes sortes de de tabous
15 pour montrer, parce que ce sont des marques qui s'adressent à la population complète, mais qui ne
16 représentent pas la population complète [rires] donc pour moi c'était important. Fait qu'une fois que
17 j'ai réalisé, pis j'ai commencé à avoir des gens qui se sont mis à par exemple la première fois que
18 j'ai mis euh une femme aux cheveux blancs dans une affiche chez chez Compagnie G, pis elle était
19 pas, elle était super cool méga-fashion, elle et qu'on cassait ce stéréotype de parce que t'as des cheveux
20 blancs, t'es vieille et donc t'es plus intéressée par la mode pis y'avait des choses intéressantes, j'- j'ai
21 commencé ça, on a commencé à recevoir tellement de emails, tellement de commentaires de femmes
22 en disant « God, merci! », même quand on a commencé à mettre des femmes taille plus des femmes
23 avec des vergetures. La première fois que j'ai mis une femme handicapée parce que les femmes
24 handicapées s'habillent aussi, fait que et là j'ai réalisé à quel point on touche les gens à travers ce
25 qu'on fait. Mais là, quand on réalise ça, ben en savoir c'est comme en s- on réalise qu'on sait pas
26 assez finalement. Pis là, j'ai commencé à me dire OK, mais dans le fond ce que je promouvrais à tous
27 les jours, c'est de la surconsommation.

From this turning point, instead of only using interest and learning opportunities as a guiding justification for career decisions, Isabel evokes the importance of the work that she does regarding the negative impact of the marketing industry (lines 1-3, 6-10). This sense of importance conveyed by her discourse appears to be the motor behind her actions. The link between the cause and actions taken in consequence is present by saying that she “[a] réalisé” multiple times and followed by what she desired (work in diversity and inclusivity in fashion (line 4)), what she worked on and did (show all types of body shapes, cultural origins, sexual orientations, ages (lines 12-16), break stereotypes (lines 17-20)) in consequence. These actions in turn is said to have become a catalyst for more realization about herself. These realizations are in turn reactions to her actions which form a positive feedback loop for her (see extract **I46**). In the example she provides, she mentions that it was the upon receiving emails of “merci” from women for the work she did that made her

realize “à quel point on touche les gens à travers ce qu’on fait” (lines 24-25). As much as she highlights the positive feedback she received from other women and the good will of her work, she provides a critical outlook on all this positive narration by ending on a bitter disenchanting note: “mais dans le fond ce que je promouvrais à tous les jours, c’est de la surconsommation” (lines 26-27). By this narration of putting an effort within her line of work, and pointing out, in the end, the persistent underlying problem of consumerism, Isabel illustrates the challenge of alignment between her individual agency at work to positively impact society and an industry that seeks to sell more. She even provides more legitimacy to her claim by quoting what her colleague told her about the irreconcilability of doing a good work in marketing and the well-being of the planet:

- 1 **I20 Isabel:** C’est ça que j’fais. Et donc ça, ben quand moi, mes propres valeurs c’est d’essayer de faire
2 attention, on essaie de prendre soin de la planète, on est, ben là, je dis c’est pas possible que moi je
3 sois dans le s- finalement, j’suis j’ai une de mes collègues qui dit « Mieux, j’fais mieux, on fait notre
4 job en marketing, plus la planète se porte mal. »
5 **I21 Kenny:** Ouais
6 **I22 Isabel:** Mais c’est vrai. Alors donc, l’impact social, l’impact environnemental, puis là, j’me
7 suis dit, « C’est pas possible que moi, ma » pis pis j’ai eu des j’ai eu des reconnaissances, j’ai eu
8 j’ai reçu le prix de XYZ de l’année en #####. Ben on dirait que quand j’ai reçu ce prix là, ça a été un
9 choc. Alors, oui, j’tais heureuse, mais en fait, j’me suis dit, OK, on me félicite, mais p- finalement,
10 pour pousser et promouvoir la la surconsommation et et et parce que l’industrie de la mode, c’est la
11 2e industrie la plus polluante au monde là.
12 **I23 Kenny:** Oh wow
13 **I24 Isabel:** Fait que j’ai commencé à avoir vraiment un un un un malaise avec ça. Et euh donc voilà, et
14 puis c’est arrivé jusqu’au point où à un moment donné, j’ai dit « OK, non, il faut que je change, il faut
15 que je fasse autre chose. » Donc j’ai j’ai donné ma démission, j’ai j’ai quitté.
16 **I25 Kenny:** Wow woh, c’est assez brave de tout ça de de même si jamais tu faisais quelque
17 chose de bien en promouvant d’autres d’autres formes, d’autres, d’autres types de femmes, d’autres
18 formes de corps à travers la publicité, tu sentais quand même qu’y’avait une incohérence dans c’que tu
19 faisais dans d’autres aspects et y’avait beaucoup de remises en question. Et aussi question de conflit
20 avec les valeurs, alors ce c’était comment de vivre avec ces ces contradictions-là?
21 **I26 Isabel:** Ben c’est de la dissonance cognitive. Euh total. Mais c’est comment c’est très
22 douloureux en fait. Enfin moi je l’ai vécu comme une douleur. Euhm c’est que euhm j’a- je j’avais
23 de plus en plus de mal à vivre avec ce que je faisais euhm physiquement, mentalement, c’- c’était en
24 train d’me de de me de de comme de de je sais pas de pas- j- là j- j’utilise peut-être un terme qui
25 est grand, mais je l- ça j- ça me ça me détruisait quelque chose en tout cas. C’est-à-dire que plus
26 j’avançais, plus j’trouvais qu’OK, je fais ça pis pis pis j- pis là je je vais te dire ça en toute humilité,
27 mais j- j’avais du succès à le faire, c’est à dire que [rires] évidemment, avec les années d’expérience,
28 ben on on connaît notre métier, donc j’connaissais les ficelles, pis là, j’tais comme OK, mais c’est
29 j’connais les ficelles, ça fonctionne, mais est-ce que c’est ça que j’ai envie de faire, pis moi, j’ai un
30 enfant donc donc c’était vraiment c’était douloureux là, c’était une remise en question, j’étais de moins
31 en moins bien et heureuse dans c’que j’faisais.

Isabel explains that the realization of the contradiction was as a choc and a painful emotional experience for her. It was when that physical and mental suffering reached a certain point that is said to have led to her to quit her job and wanting to change (lines 13-15). For a moment, she kept

on going even if the situation was not pleasant for her and she uses the psychological concept of cognitive dissonance (line 21) to explain how she was still trying to do a work that did not feel right. She then gets into the specifics of what appears to be aspects of her life that she needed to take in considerations to decide what to do to address her dissatisfaction, but her expertise in her profession and her role as a mother are presented as set-backs. They are presented as a source of conflict with her desire to change; work was “working” for her, she knew where to pull the strings (lines 28-29) and she even won an award for the recognition of her work (lines 7-8), things were going well, but this came with a caveat. This caveat is juxtaposed by the “but” statement of whether she wanted to do that (keep on doing her career) and, on top of it, she mentions having a child (lines 28-30) suggesting that it was weighting on her decisions.

7.3.2. Personal growth and evolution

To make sense of Isabel’s drastic shift in career priorities, the following extract provides a dive into the themes of her personal growth:

- 1 **I27 Kenny:** Uh hmm. Et euh c’tait c’tait mais c’- est-ce que c’tait l’intention que t’avais initialement
- 2 en entrant dans l’industrie, est-c’que tu voulais f- déjà faire euh du bien si on veut dire
- 3 **I28 Isabel:** Non Non non non euh non en fait, honnêtement, quand j’suis rentrée en marketing, on se
- 4 posait pas ce genre de questions là. Euh on avait du budget, moi c’est ça, j’faisais de la pub pour la
- 5 bière là fait que [rires] euh pour la récolte, donc on j- on se posait pas ces questions-là. J’pense que
- 6 j’pense que s- on évolue comme humain et heureusement. Donc moi j’pas la même personne que
- 7 j’étais à 20 ans, c’est sûr, fait que j’ai appris, j’ai évolué, puis je pense qu’on est quand même
- 8 beaucoup plus responsable de ce qui se passe autour de nous aujourd’hui que quand on était y’a 20 ans.
- 9 Donc euh donc non, c’était pas mon intention, mais c’est ça, c’est au fur et à mesure des années, j’ai
- 10 trouvé ça tellement gratifiant de réaliser que j’faisais du bien à la société ent- entre guillemet hein avec
- 11 [rires]
- 12 **I29 Kenny:** [rires]
- 13 **I30 Isabel:** J’pas Gandhi là, on s’entend, mais disons que j’fais du bien à certaines femmes qui
- 14 voyaient des images différentes, et cetera. Que là de de de ben, c’est ça de de pas aller plus loin,
- 15 c’était vraiment une sorte d’échec.
- 16 **I31 Kenny:** Donc c’est vraiment euh mais vraiment entre guillemets, c’était à à au moment quand
- 17 vous recevez les courriels de des femmes euh qui qui vous remerciaient de de publiciser ce genre
- 18 d’images là, c’est là qu’y’a eu un certain début de switch si on veut dire?
- 19 **I32 Isabel:** Probablement et puis puis moi, dans ma vie personnelle, moi j’suis devenue dans tout ça
- 20 j’suis devenue prof de XYZ, j’suis dev- j’ai commencé à réaliser beaucoup de choses dans ma vie
- 21 personnelle donc c’est ça le l’envie de participer positivement à à la société.

Based on the analysis so far, I detailed how the social responsibilities in her early career were absent as the emphasis of her early career discourse was on finding the industry of interest, work opportunities and passion. In the extract above, further justification was given by Isabel as to why

it was not in her initial intention to do good (for society). The marketing industry and herself were presented as ignorant since “[ils] se posai[en]t pas ce genre de questions là” (lines 3-5). She dissociates from her previous self by saying that “[elle n’est] pas la même personne qu[’elle] étai[t] à 20 ans”, that she learned and evolved (lines 6-7). There is an acknowledgement of the discrepancy of her intentions before and now (line 9).

She then attributes an external factor to her evolution, which is her perception (“je pense” (line 7)) that society is now more responsible about societal issues (lines 7-8). There is a transition from very personal skill and interest-based discourse regarding her work, towards the impact of her work and awareness of the limitations in her own industry. The awareness comes from her comparison to Gandhi, meaning that the good she does (by showing more diversity within her marketing work) is nothing compared to him (lines 9-14). Her feeling of failure associated with not going further with her action also depicts the limit of her positive impact by her work in marketing.

Through Isabel’s evolution by desiring to participate positively to society (line 21), there is a shift of a more holistic perspective to consider her personal life as well and not only the professional aspect. The impact of a change in her personal life is introduced by following up that “j’suis devenue dans tout ça” (what she has discussed in the extract) a teacher for a XYZ activity (lines 19-20). This suggests that it is a consequence for having changed her perspective over time and “c’est ça le l’envie de participer positivement à à la société” (line 21).

7.3.3. Identity difficulties and challenges

In this part of the interview, I began to ask about the difficulties Isabel had throughout this transition. The renunciation of a big salary is one of the difficulties as well as trying to find another job since the opportunities she kept on receiving after quitting her previous job were very similar to what she was doing. She was being recruited for what she was known for:

- 1 **I34 Isabel:** [...] Mais au fur et à mesure que je cherchais des emplois, euh je j’ai, j’ai eu beaucoup de
- 2 chance, j’ai eu beaucoup d’opportunités, mais les opportunités, c’était grosso modo similaire à ce que
- 3 j’faisais, c’est-à-dire que je me rendais compte c’était des industries ou de mais c’est sûr, j’étais
- 4 recrutée pour ce pourquoi j’étais connue, donc pour avoir pour pour continuer à générer plus de
- 5 consommation et cetera [rires]. J’étais victime un peu du succès des années d’avant. Et et le le choc
- 6 du salaire, c’est quand j’ai commencé à avoir des des propositions, pis de dire bon ben pis ça
- 7 c’t’arrivé à peu près au mois de mi(mai?)-juin. Euh où là où là j’ai eu différentes propositions pis
- 8 j’avais des supers beaux salaires qui m’étaient offerts mais là, c’est là que j’ai fait vraiment mon espèce

9 de 2e choix à dire « OK, non, j'ai pas fait tout ça pour recommencer ailleurs même si j'vais gagner
10 plus d'argent. » Donc ça ça a ça a ça a été si si tu veux, ben le la le premier défi, c'est à dire de
11 dire, « OK, est-ce que de de combien j'ai besoin dans la vie là, est-ce que j'ai besoin de faire X
12 à:, ou est-ce que je peux me contenter de Y. C'est quoi c'est quoi dans le fond dont j'ai vraiment
13 besoin? » Le 2e défi, c'est que ben moi, ça a été comme ça, c'est que euhm on se fait une image du
14 statut social que l'on a. Moi j'tais vice-présidente, je faisais partie du conseil du comité exécutif
15 chez Compagnie G. J'tais en j'étais la la la vice-présidente marketing avec le plus d'expérience, le
16 plus de succès, donc j'étais souvent appelée à devenir une référence pour mes collègues, et cetera, donc
17 euh y'a y'a quelque chose de l'ego qui est là-dedans évidemment là, de de du statut. Quand on se
18 présente, t'sais t'es qui, ben ah tel rôle j'fais bah ah OK. Et là faut laisser aller ça [rires]. Je sais
19 que ça a l'air idiot, mais mais euhm on se fait beaucoup de construction sociale autour d'un titre,
20 d'une responsabilité pis là, ben, je parlais en économie sociale où je n'avais absolument aucune
21 expérience. Donc il fallait que j'assume que j'étais considérée comme celle qui ne savait rien là-
22 dedans, euh qui parlait de 0 dans le fond, pis qui devait tout apprendre. Donc de de laisser aller ça
23 et de laisser aller aussi bien l'image qu'on se fait que nos ou nous notre entourage va penser, que
24 qu'est-ce que mon mari va penser que j'laisse aller cette job-là? Est-ce qu'il va toujours être fier de
25 moi, qu'est-ce que mes parents, c'est c'est bête, mais c'est tout ça aussi là. [inaudible] Pour être très
26 très honnête là.

At this part of her transition of finding a new career path, the details she provides when speaking of her work regards the impact and the consequences of it. She was being “recrutée pour ce pourquoi [elle] étai[t] connue, donc pour avoir pour pour continuer à générer plus de consommation et cetera” (lines 3-5). Her past self enters in conflict with her quest for a new self in this extract. A dilemma representing this conflict is presented when she says that “[elle] étai[t] victime un peu du succès des années d'avant” (line 5). This highlights the tension between the social expectations of career success – often measured in climbing up the career ladder and financial gain – and her aspiration of having a positive impact on society and aligning her value with her work. She was successful because she kept on receiving opportunities in accordance with her past achievement, but she says that she was a victim of her past self since it made it difficult for her to receive different type of opportunities instead of what she would usually receive. There is an identity inertia, meaning that there is a tendency for her identity to remain unchanged due to external (how people are said to perceive her (lines 3-5)) and internal (how she talked about ego (line 17)) factors.

A new opportunity within the same line of work with higher salary is not associated with career progression as Isabel quotes herself telling herself “OK, non, j'ai pas fait tout ça pour recommencer ailleurs même si j'vais gagner plus d'argent” (lines 9-10). The identity as a being an expert, a person of reference, a successful vice-president that she built over her career is holding her back. By saying that “[il] faut laisser aller ça” (line 18), “ça” being this ego and social status associated with

her past identity (lines 13-14, 17), the feeling of something holding her back is made apparent. This image that she presents that she had of herself is putting pressure on herself and creates expectations that attributed to others since she is worried about what other people will think of her (lines 22-23). Even in those feelings, there is an internal conflict as she trivializes this feeling by saying that it's "idiot" (line 19), suggesting she is aware that she should not worry about others' opinions, but she still thinks about it.

To alleviate this tension, as previously mentioned, Isabel suddenly quit her job. The discomfort she was having got to a point where it led her to take transformative action:

- 1 **I38 Isabel:** Ouais mais en fait j'pense que j'ai été juste tellement mal que j'avais plus de choix en
- 2 fait. C- c- j'pouvais plus vivre avec moi là. J'suis comme.
- 3 **I39 Kenny:** OK.
- 4 **I40 Isabel:** C'est plus possible, pis euh pis j- j'me sentais une responsabilité envers ma famille et
- 5 tout ça de dire « OK là, faut que j'prenne soin de moi parce que là là j- je sais pas où est-ce que ça
- 6 va mais ça me ça y'avait quelque chose que qui se détruisait un peu là à l'intérieur moi, fait que j'tais
- 7 vraiment, c'est ça dissonance cognitive là c'était plus possible. Donc c'tait comme si j'avais plus le
- 8 choix et à un moment donné j'ai dis « OK c't'assez, là y faut que ça arrête fait que prend les
- 9 prend les choses en main, puis a- » j'voulais pas devenir quelqu'un qui euh si tu veux parce que c'est
- 10 vrai que j'y ai pensé, « OK j'vais chercher quelque chose pendant que j'suis là », mais c'est comme
- 11 être à c'est difficile d'me chercher un emploi pendant qu'on est dans un autre emploi hein, parce que
- 12 quelque part ton ta tête est plus là, pis t'sais si tu commences, en tout cas, c'est c'est. Ah mais là c'est
- 13 ça, je, il fallait que je cherche autre chose et il fallait que j'prenne le temps pour me demander c'tait
- 14 quoi cette autre chose-là donc euh voilà.

The pain that she mentions having felt was described as something that was taking control of her. She then positions herself as a victim, since she could not live with herself anymore (line 2), and something was getting a bit destroyed within her (line 6) due to her internal conflict. The feeling of total lack of agency in this situation is presented as a turning point for her to take back control over her life. This feeling is conveyed when she explains that it was as if she no longer had the choice (lines 7-9) in conjunction (through the use of the word "and") with her telling herself that it was enough and that she had to take things in her own hands. There began a change of her identity as a parent as well, since it was initially a role that was holding her back (I26 lines 29-30), but there is a shift in her perspective in this pivotal moment. Her parental responsibility is now presented as a source of change rather than a constraint. To provide for her family requires her to take care of herself, to feel better regarding the work environment that was destroying her from the inside. The context suggests that it is about aligning her work to her desires of contributing

positively to society. Personal fulfillment and family responsibilities are no longer in contradiction by this shift in her perspective of identity.

In this segment of Isabel's career transition, the apprehension about leaving her secure job transforms itself into a call to action:

- 1 **I41 Kenny:** Uh huh. Ok, pis c'était pas trop stressant avec l'incertitude parce que des fois, ça force à
2 à revenir rapidement...
3 **I42 Isabel:** Ouais
4 **I43 Kenny:** ... dans dans les anciennes habitudes, si on veut dire.
5 **I44 Isabel:** Ouais Ouais euhm en fait, je me suis s- longtemps dit que j- que l'incertitude allait être
6 pas gérable avant de quitter mon emploi, pis on dirait qu'une fois que j'ai quitté mon emploi
7 euhm j'ai très bien dealé avec l'incertitude.
8 **I45 Kenny:** OK.
9 **I46 Isabel:** Et et je deal encore assez bien finalement avec parce que parce que c- euhm j'ai
10 quitté, puis en fait ce qui s'est passé, c'est que quand j'ai quitté, donc je venais de recevoir mon prix de
11 XYZ de [rires] l'année, j'ai quitté comme un mois après. Donc euh, tu sais les gens étaient comme, «
12 Tu viens de recevoir un prix pourquoi tu? » [rires] Et en fait, quand j'ai reçu ce prix-là, j'ai fait un
13 y m'avaient demandé de faire un vidéo pour me présenter sur sur Réseau Social A et puis mon
14 vidéo en fait j'ai fait comme un espèce d'appel c'était vraiment candide j's pas sûre, euh j'ai fait
15 un appel un peu à ma communauté en disant, « Est-ce que je suis la seule en marketing à sentir cette
16 dissonance cognitive, est-ce qu'on peut pas faire quelque chose de mieux. » Pis, j'ai eu plein de
17 monde qui m'ont contacté, qui m'ont dit « Oui, moi aussi. » Donc j'ai laissé tomber mon emploi
18 mais rapidement, j'ai organisé un premier appel avec tous ces gens qui m'avaient contacté en me disant
19 « Bon, on fait quoi? » C'est de là qu'est née Organisation A en fait, hein, c'était pas du tout l'intention
20 de créer Organisation A, mais c'est de ces appels-là, on s'est dit « OK, mais il faut qu'on fasse
21 quelque chose, on est trop nombreux à sentir la même chose. » Et et on dirait que quand j'ai été
22 honnête pis que j'ai quitté tout pis que je je je me suis dit « OK, j'peux pu (plus) vivre avec ça, ça
23 m'a attiré tellement de positif. Y'avait plein de gens qui ont commencé à dire des projets qui sont
24 arrivés, des gens qui ont commencé à me par- je sais pas que finalement l'incertitude je l'ai bien
25 gérée, parce que c'est comme si en étant bien aligné avec mes valeurs, j'amenais du positif là, les
26 gens voyaient que j'étais honnête donc et et sincère, donc ce projet de Organisation A s'est
27 développé, euh puis le succès est est au-delà de mes attentes là fait que c'est ça.

Through the action she took, such as calling those who responded to her call for help to her community and then starting her own non-profit (lines 15-19), she is showing her authenticity and honesty by distancing herself from her previous work through quitting. Then, she demonstrates legitimacy to what she did by saying that projects came to her (lines 23-24). Using passive voice, it suggests that it was not her who sought after those projects, but other people who trusted her enough to reach out to her.

7.3.4. Relationship with others and self

When I asked Isabel about the support she received from people who were close to her, she mentions that her husband was very supportive and trusted her. Then I commented that it must have been the same for her friend. She was about to say something about no one who went against her then proceeds to correct herself:

- 1 **I60 Isabel:** Ouais, en fait y'a personne, ben c''pas vrai, j'ai une amie un jour qui quand j'avais reçu
- 2 des donc des offres là quand je cherchais, j'ai une amie avec un moment donné qui m'a dit « Non
- 3 mais Isabel, faut que t'arrêtes, pr- prends c'te job là, fait de l'argent, puis dans 10 ans quand t'auras ##
- 4 ans, fais ce que t'as envie, mais comme là là fais de l'argent, profite-en » [rires]. El- elle me disait pas
- 5 ça pour être pour être méchante ou désagréable, mais t'es comme c'est de sa façon de voir, puis
- 6 euhm et puis j'ai dit non, j'pourrais pas j'pourrais juste pas [rires].

Her friend's advice represents the interpretative repertoire that prioritizes financial security and how financial security will lead to freedom. Her friend told her to make money and after a few years, to do what she wants (lines 3-4). The implication of making money first, by the use of the "puis" adverb (line 3), suggests the freedom that comes afterward. Afterward, Isabel provides her response to her friend that is a counter-narrative consisting of pursuing personal fulfilment through value alignment. Laughter is also used to express distance from her friend's perspective. Saying "non" (line 6) is also a strong word of opposition which demonstrates the level of conviction she has in defying the route of financial security. It is to note that it is not so much of an opposition to a mainstream narrative as many people were supportive of her decision. Through this recollection of interaction with her friend, she is also being careful to not vilify her friend. This is from the broader social norm that each individual has their own values and perspectives. The comment she makes positions her as understanding and tolerant of other opinions and without feeling threatened or being defensive.

Even from people from within the SSE, Isabel is met with mixed reaction:

- 1 **I63 Kenny:** Uh huh, et c'était comment euhm t'sais le quand tu navigues dans c'te monde-là, ben c'est
- 2 c'est un langage qui est un peu différent, fait que c'était comment t'sais la la l'adaptation et aussi la
- 3 réception des gens de ce de ce secteur?
- 4 **I64 Isabel:** Ouais. Euhm euh euh des plus et des moins. Les plus, c'est que euh y'a certaines
- 5 personnes qui ont vu dans mon profil et dans c'que je fais dans le fond le fait que comme j'arrivais
- 6 du secteur privé euh et que j'arrivais de grandes organisation, ben pour moi c'est pas compliqué de
- 7 d'amener des oup, d'amener des gens ensemble, de créer des équipes, de faire des projets, de foncer,
- 8 donc y'a des gens qui euh ont vraiment embarqué qui m'ont suivi, qui m'ont encouragé euh j'pense à
- 9 l'Association A, t'sais, Organisation B qui m'ont invité à la conférence, t'sais, y'a beaucoup
- 10 d'organisations qui ont fait comme « Oh wow, OK c'est super, on voit que tu veux foncer, puis donc
- 11 génial. » J'ai par contre j'te dirais pis c'est 50 50. J'ai d'autres d'autres regroupements, t'sais des

12 associations qui ont qui ont été très sceptiques pis qui m'ont dit, euh « Ouais, pff, ça va durer combien
 13 de temps? Tu vas faire ça combien de temps? Ça va durer combien de temps que tu t'écartes avant de
 14 faire [rires] pas assez d'argent. [rires] Euh, est-ce que tu fais ça pour faire du greenwashing? Est-ce
 15 qu'y a pas d'idée derrière euh qui serait pas sincère? Est-ce que t'as des id-, t'sais comme un agenda
 16 caché, un peu, » beaucoup de beaucoup, de de doutes, dans le fond, t'sais sur les intentions vraiment et
 17 est-ce que je suis capable de rentrer dans cette nouvelle organisation.
 18 **I65 Kenny:** Uh hmm
 19 **I66 Isabel:** C'est ça. 50 50. Mais ceci étant dit, t'sais les gens qui m'ont dit « Mais est-ce que tu
 20 vas y arriver, est-ce que, ... » t'sais c'étaient des bonnes questions, t'sais j'ai j'ai j'ai pris ça de manière
 21 très ouverte aussi parce que c'est sûr que j- je j'ai aucune idée t'sais j'ai tout à apprendre. Fait qu'y'a
 22 beaucoup de des gens qui t'sais m'ont pas m'ont mis des bâtons dans les roues parce qu'y'a personne
 23 qui m'a mis des bâtons dans les roues, mais qui m'ont si tu veux que qui ont été peut-être un peu « OK,
 24 calme-toi, avance doucement, apprend », ils m'ont fait me poser les bonnes questions t'sais, c'est c'est

On one hand, there are associations and organizations who welcomed her by inviting her to do conferences and provided encouragements (lines 8-11). But on the other hand, her identity associated with her past within the private sector was met with skepticism as people doubt the authenticity and sincerity behind her motives to go towards the SSE. For example, she reports that they asked her whether she was greenwashing, or if she had ulterior motives (lines 11-17). This interaction is simply glossed over by Isabel without her providing further explanations. In between, there are people who questioned her due to what she reports to be genuine concerns about the feasibility of her endeavours. They are presented as such by quoting what she thinks they were trying to say: “y'a personne qui m'a mis des bâtons dans les roues, mais qui m'ont si tu veux que qui ont été peut-être un peu ‘OK, calme-toi, avance doucement, apprend’” (lines 22-24). Once again, when met with possibly confronting questions, she presents herself as open-minded and receptive by presenting those who doubt her as asking good questions.

Within this extract, when speaking about those who welcomed her, Isabel provides an enumeration of skills from her previous experience within the private sector in big organizations and mentioning that it was easy: “c'est pas compliqué [...] d'amener des gens ensemble, de créer des équipes, de faire des projets, de foncer” (lines 5-7). Bringing up these skills transposes the experiences she had into the past towards the experiences she will gain after her transition. It legitimizes part of her previous identity and negotiates her position within her new professional context.

Delving deeper into the topic of ego and status, I asked Isabel if it was difficult of letting go of all that. The shift in identities she experienced is framed as positive events albeit destabilizing:

1 **I77 Kenny:** [...] t'as parlé de de l'ego, puis de de statut, est-ce que c'était difficile de t'en départir de
2 (.) de cette attachement à cette ce statut là?
3 **I78 Isabel:** Euh ben c't'un c't'un processus un peu hein d'une certaine façon t'sais, mais j'trouve
4 qu'à partir du moment où je l'ai vu, puis j'ai réalisé que je ne suis pas ma job, t'sais déjà ça ça fait
5 une distance euhm et t'sais j'ai j'ai eu des p'tites étapes comme par exemple [rires] quand j'me suis
6 retrouvée à l'école, donc t'sais là j'ai dit j'me suis dit, « OK, je vais faire un DESS en développement
7 durable. » D'abord un (énumération), je suis beaucoup plus vieille, évidemment que t'sais les gens qui
8 sont là, même si au DESS, t'sais on est quand même y'a beaucoup de professionnels, mais reste, et
9 j'suis arrivée là, puis là tu sais là j'suis dans un cours face à un prof qui est souvent plus jeune que moi
10 ou qui a mon âge, puis là faut que j'prenne le principe que c'est que je ne sais rien, puis une
11 étudiante jusqu'à t'sais ça ça fait longtemps que j'tais pas dans une situation d'apprentissage,
12 t'sais de de de tu comprends, j't'ai souvent dans une tu sais je gérais des équipes, je gérais des
13 grosses équipes t'sais chez Compagnie F, on était plus de 100, t'sais donc donc c'tait moi qui
14 conseillait, c'tait moi qui tu comprends, euh puis là j'tai- j'suis dans une étape où « OK, je ne sais
15 rien », mais ça fait que tu sais j'ai eu des petits moments comme ça de comme « Woo, OK, tu sais,
16 c'est un peu déstabilisant », mais mais mais c'est c'est extraordinaire comme feeling, parce que
17 c'est tellement rafraîchissant t'sais. J'ai vraiment l'impression que j'évolue, t'sais je, j'me suis
18 débarassée de plein de trucs qui m- me qui servaient à rien. Pis là, j'suis juste dans, t'sais, j'apprends
19 euh c'est de s'rendre de se ramener un peu plus d'humilité là t'sais ça fait du bien là.

She explains that leaving behind her ego and social status was a process, and by saying “un peu”, “d’une certaine façon” (line 3), it suggests that there are steps that occurred gradually, but that it was not well-defined. Many of her identities were challenged and she presents that there was undoing to do. First, there is a detachment from her professional identity as she explicitly mentions that “[elle n’est] pas ma job” and “ça fait une distance” (lines 4-5). Second, the identity of having an expertise that comes with years of experiences (lines 5-7) is reframed through a lens of personal growth rather than professional achievement. There is also an element of age comparison with her teacher as he is younger (lines 7-11). Normally, a teacher is expected to be older and more experienced. Due to this inversion of characteristics, she positions herself instead as someone who would benefit from learning more instead of being less experienced despite her older age. Those destabilizing moments are reframed as “rafraîchissant” and feels “extraordinaire” (lines 15-17). Positive emotions are used to transform the potentially uncomfortable emotions resulting from questioning her high-status identities as she moved towards the SSE. These experiences gave her the “impression qu[’elle] évolue” because “[elle s’est] débarrassée de plein de trucs qui [lui] qui servaient à rien” (lines 17-19). Some of these things could be part of her past identities and by treating them as worthless, worthy of being thrown away, she detaches herself partly from her previous identities.

7.3.5. After the transition

After the transition towards the SSE, I asked if Isabel had the intention of staying where she is right now. In response, she mentions not having the intention to leave as she feels more at her place in this new environment. At the same time, she is open to change in the future. For now, her work takes a big part in her life:

- 1 **I87 Kenny:** Ouais, donc t'as pas mal l'intention de rester dans où c'que t'es présentement pas de pas
2 de désir de revenir dans dans dans ...
3 **I88 Isabel:** Non
4 **I89 Kenny:** ... l'autre. OK.
5 **I90 Isabel:** Non, pis t'sais, j'dis pas jamais euh jamais jamais je je sais pas, t'sais je sais pas de quoi
6 l'avenir sera fait, mais mais si n- non, vraiment j'suis vraiment bien bien comme je suis, je me
7 sens sur mon X. J'pense qu'on a plein d'opportunités t'sais si jamais je vois que je m'en sors pas dans
8 un an parce que t'sais c'est quand même beaucoup de travail de t'sais j'travaille beaucoup plus
9 [rires], même si j'ai toujours travaillé beaucoup, j'travaille énormément, euhm mais euh mais c'est ça,
10 c'est très gratifiant, donc t'sais j'espère que ça va marcher assez pour que t'sais ça puisse prendre un
11 peu un peu d'ampleur et voilà ouais.
12 **I91 Kenny:** Ouais et le travail ça te ça représente quoi pour toi maintenant?
13 **I92 Isabel:** Euhm écoute euhm moi j'm- c'est une bonne question, euhm c'est quand même si
14 y'a moins de y'a définitivement moins de barrières entre euh vraiment qui je suis t'sais, ma
15 personnalité, mes forces, mes opportunités, tout ça et c'que je fais. Fait que j'ai vraiment l'impression
16 (.) d'être à la bonne place au bon moment. Euh t'sais je euh c'est ça. J'pense que donc donc le travail
17 aujourd'hui c'est quoi c'est comme c'est comme si c'est c'est plus un travail, en fait je sais c'est un
18 travail, mais c'est c'est euh pis ça a ça a ses défauts aussi là c'est que du coup t'sais c'est plus
19 difficile de faire un break euh t'sais, pour moi c'est plus difficile de prendre un weekend, faire off,
20 t'sais c'est c'est du coup parce que c'est comme ma vie là, tu comprends ce que je veux dire, y'a pas
21 de y'a pas de « OK là je suis au boulot, pis là j'suis à la maison » euhm donc ça ça ça ça ça a ces
22 opportunités aussi là, mais euhm j'ai je je travaille en même temps, j'ai j'ai comme pas l'impression
23 de travailler, c'est c'- mon travail à moi, c'est d'essayer là là de faire progresser une industrie qui a
24 vraiment besoin de changer.

She has many opportunities that allows her to have a lot of work to do, but she avoids having a definitive statement about the future (“j'dis pas jamais euh jamais jamais”, “je sais pas de quoi l'avenir sera fait”) (lines 5-8). This provides her with some flexibility and openness to change, and it reflects cautious optimism and realistic understanding of her situation.

In terms of her perspective on her current work, an ideological dilemma emerges. There has been a redefinition of the meaning of work for Isabel, from having professional achievement in industries that interests her towards aligning her values with her work. The change brought her to realize that she is not her work, but in this extract, her work is “comme [s]a vie” (line 20). Paradoxically, this shift in identity, by not defining herself through her job, ends up making her

feel like her work belongs to her. By dissociating her identity from her professional role and aiming to align her work with her values, her work has become an integral part of her life. Now, her professional engagement is not just a job, but an authentic extension of her identity.

7.3.6. *Education and culture*

At the end of the interview, concerning the other realizations Isabel's had, she brings up how education and culture shaped her relationship with different aspects of her life:

- 1 **I99 Kenny:** [...] est-ce qui a comme d'autres réalis- réalisations d'autres révélations que que t'as eu
2 à travers ce ce cheminement?
3 **I100 Isabel:** Euhm, je pense qu'y'a euh t'sais toute une réalisation de aussi la la quête de performance
4 là euh que quelque part, t'sais j'pense qu'on est nombreux dans notre société aujourd'hui à à vivre
5 avec ça dès notre éducation t'sais. T'sais, moi j'étais à l'école, j'tais une performante, je savais où est-
6 ce qu'il fallait que je fasse, je voulais faire mon diplôme, il fallait que j- j- j'aie [tousse] un bon boulot,
7 il fallait que je monte dans la hiérarchie, il fallait que j'aie une maison, il fallait que t'sais, y'a
8 beaucoup de ça euh pis t'sais je je j'ai réalisé euhm à quel point ben est-ce que cette performance-là
9 m'a vraiment rendu si heureuse là, t'sais je suis un stade, t'sais, j'ai été à un moment donné dans ma
10 vie en me disant, « OK mais c'est c'est comme si c'était rendu dans notre inconscient collectif là t'sais,
11 y faut qu'on ait plus, y faut qu'on soit plus haut, y faut qu'on on ait un meilleur titre, y faut qu'on ait
12 un meilleur salaire, y faut qu'on » t'sais y'a En tout cas, moi ça a fait partie de mon éducation, pis
13 t'sais je suis française, je sais pas si c'est vrai à cause de la culture française euh t'sais peut-être enfin,
14 je je sais pas mais c'est pour moi, c- c- c'était comme tracé, y fallait que j'ai c'te performance là, pis la
15 performance, elle elle se traduit après dans plein de trucs dans notre vie comme t'sais j'ai commencé
16 Activité XYZ, OK, y fallait que je sois capable de [...] en 2 mois là, pis après j'ai t'sais y'a plein de
17 trucs t'sais j'ai commencé à courir Ok y faut que j'fasse des demi marathons, pis là y fau- c'est comme
18 une espèce de culture t'sais quand tu manges bien, y faut vraiment que tu manges très très bien là, pis
19 là t'élève un enfant, y faut que tu sois la mère parfaite, pis t'sais y'a y'a plein de trucs comme ça pis on
20 dirait que là, j'ai comme réali- t'sais quand j'te disais j'ai plus de douceur dans ma vie, on dirait que
21 j'ai comme laissé aller beaucoup aussi ça en disant « OK mais mon bonheur, y'est pas dans le où est-ce
22 que je veux aller, il est dans ce que je fais aujourd'hui beaucoup plus dans plus dans le temps présent,
23 même plus de douceur face à ma propre performance en moi », tu sais c'est c'est correct si ça me dit à
24 2h j'ai envie de faire une sieste t'sais.

The sense of duty and milestones has been externalized in her speech. Instead of phrasing it as “**Je** devais monter dans la hiérarchie, **je** devais ..., etc.”, she rather expresses it as “il fallait que je monte dans la hiérarchie, il fallait que j'aie une maison, il fallait que” (lines 6-12). These duties are presented as being taught to her through her education and French culture (lines 12-14). By externalizing the social norms, Isabel is able to ask herself where she wants to go instead (lines 21-22) and to not follow the path that was already drawn (by society perhaps). It allows her to navigate away from a predetermined life path dictated by societal pressure towards a more introspective and self-determined journey.

7.3.7. Summary

Isabel's journey from being in a high-achieving position in marketing to starting her own non-profit as well as pursuing a diploma in sustainable development illustrates a significant transformation of her career and personal identity. She was initially driven by finding the industry she was passionate about while climbing up the corporate ladder. As she realizes more about the impact her work has on people and desires to contribute positively to society, she began to experience emotional distress as she realizes contradiction between her desires and the direction where she was headed with her career.

In her early journey, Isabel's narrative on early career decisions were filled with action verbs which reflected her agency and sense of control in pursuing career opportunities. She presents this period in a transitory tone (passing from company to company) which suggests that it was a quite insignificant moment of her career and/or that little thought has been given to her choices as if it was an automatism to explore different work environments. She was committed and identified herself with her professional beginning, but there is a disavowal of her choices as she distances from them by justifying through the little knowledge one has after graduating. She also dissociates herself from her past self through the discourse of evolution which acknowledges that she does not consider herself as the same person.

By mentioning how she became more aware of her desires and the impact of her work, it was no longer possible for her to justify doing the same work repeatedly and to pursue personal achievement within her industry. That becomes a statement of commitment of doing the right once she has voiced, for example, being aware of work contributing to consumerism. To avoid the cognitive dissonance, she states that she had to change. Naming the problems and not accepting the problems was a call to action for her.

There were parts of her identity and preconceived ideas she had to detach herself. Since she externalizes her behaviours, such as focusing on performance, and explains that this behaviour was ingrained through culture and her education, she was able to distance from her past identity. It did not belong to her anymore, which leaves her with the opportunity to renew her identity through the realizations she had about herself. This new identity desires to contribute positively to society and the validity of this identity is justified by speaking about her emotional serenity after

aligning her career with her values. She also externalizes her previous life goals (getting a house, getting a better salary, going higher up the rank, etc.) by presenting them as a result of societal pressure to which she distanced herself from in order to let place to more introspection, autonomy, and agency over her desires.

Now, Isabel's work is presented as an authentic extension of her identity as there is an alignment between the impact she wants to have and how she sees her work. Her honesty and sincerity are said to have brought her positivity. Passive voice is used to imply that she is not alone in assessing her authenticity as other agents trust her as well since their projects came to her. As much as she has support from other people, she is met with skepticism. She does not become defensive in face of these criticisms.

7.3.8. Table summary of subject positions

Subject positions	Examples	Interpretations
Interested in discovering multiple industries in the past	<p>I10 : [...] à l'origine, c'est qui m'a attiré là-dedans (en consultation), c'était le fait que j'étais capable de toucher plusieurs industries, donc découvrir plusieurs industries [...] parce que quand on sort de l'école, c'est difficile de savoir [...] dans quelle industrie on va travailler vraiment.</p>	<p>In her initial career in consulting, her interest was to discover multiple industries, but the reason provided was the difficulty to know where she wanted to work in after graduating. It slightly distances her current self from her past self by portraying her past as being unaware about her desires. This unawareness may consist of a justification of past decisions in her career path.</p>
<p>Promoter of overconsumption</p> <p>Person who values taking care of the planet</p>	<p>I18 : [...] là j'ai réalisé à quel point on touche les gens à travers ce qu'on fait. Mais là, quand on réalise ça, ben en savoir c'est comme en s- on réalise qu'on sait pas assez finalement. Pis là, j'ai commencé à me dire OK, mais dans le fond ce que je promouvrais à tous les jours, c'est de la surconsommation.</p> <p>I20 : [...] quand moi, mes propres valeurs c'est d'essayer de faire attention, on essaie de prendre soin de la planète, on est, ben là, je dis c'est pas possible que moi je sois dans le s- finalement, j'suis j'ai une de mes collègues qui dit « Mieux, j'fais mieux, on fait notre job en marketing, plus la planète se porte mal. »</p> <p>I26: c'est de la dissonance cognitive. Euh total. Mais c'est comment c'est très douloureux en fait. Enfin moi je l'ai vécu comme une douleur. Euhm c'est que euhm j'a- je j'avais de plus en plus de mal à vivre avec ce que je faisais euhm physiquement, mentalement,</p>	<p>The statement of realizing about the negative impact of her work makes it less justifiable to stay where she is right now. It presents her as more aware about her impact on society through her career. This presents her past self as unaware, which implies that she is more aware now, suggesting she cannot continue doing what she is doing.</p> <p>There is a misalignment between her work identity and her values. She presents herself baffled by this realization, “refusing” to admit (“c'est pas possible”), to which she finally admits by quoting her colleague. Later in the interview, she used the concept of cognitive dissonance to describe that period of emotional pain and still doing what she was doing despite her realisation.</p>
Victim of her success	<p>I34 : j'étais recrutée pour ce pourquoi j'étais connue, donc pour avoir pour continuer à générer plus de consommation et cetera [rires]. J'étais victime un peu du succès des années d'avant. [...] c'est que euhm on se fait une image du statut social que l'on a. Moi j'étais vice-présidente, je faisais partie du conseil du comité exécutif chez Compagnie G. J'étais en j'étais la la la vice-présidente marketing avec le plus d'expérience, le plus de succès</p>	<p>The context suggests that her previous success hindered her opportunities to have different opportunities to change her career. What she was said to be known for and what image she said she made of herself created some form of identity inertia.</p>

Honest and sincere	I46 : [...] parce que c'est comme si en étant bien aligné avec mes valeurs, j'amenais du positif là, les gens voyaient que j'étais honnête donc et et sincère [...]	Referring to other people's description of her as being honest and sincere in her transition, it gives legitimacy to her claims. It constructs her as authentically aligned to her values.
Not her job	I78 : [...] j'ai réalisé que je ne suis pas ma job [...] I92 : [...] donc donc le travail aujourd'hui c'est quoi c'est comme c'est comme si c'est c'est plus un travail, en fait je sais c'est un travail, mais c'est c'est euh pis ça a ça a ses défauts aussi là c'est que du coup t'sais c'est plus difficile de faire un break euh t'sais, pour moi c'est plus difficile de prendre un weekend, faire off, t'sais c'est c'est du coup parce que c'est comme ma vie là [...]	Distances herself from defining herself through her job. At the same time, her job is said to be her life. It suggests that it is an extension of her which is paradoxical with the statement that she is not her job. In this context, her discourse may define her job as an extension of her self instead of being the defining aspect of her.
Was a top performer, focused on traditional success metrics	I100 : [...] moi j'étais à l'école, j'tais une performante, je savais où est-ce qu'il fallait que je fasse, je voulais faire mon diplôme, il fallait que j- j- j'aie [tousse] un bon boulot, il fallait que je monte dans la hiérarchie, il fallait que j'aie une maison, il fallait que [...] c'est comme si c'était rendu dans notre inconscient collectif là t'sais, y faut qu'on ait plus, y faut qu'on soit plus haut, y faut qu'on ait un meilleur titre, y faut qu'on ait un meilleur salaire, y faut qu'on [...] « OK mais mon bonheur, y'est pas dans le où est-ce que je veux aller, il est dans ce que je fais aujourd'hui beaucoup plus dans plus dans le temps présent, même plus de douceur face à ma propre performance en moi », [...]	Describing herself in the past, using past tense, she constructs an image of a typical performer with the goals of going up the corporate ladder as dictated by societal norms. It suggests that she was unconsciously pursuing a career by just following the traditional narrative. She now distances herself from her past by using the discourse on happiness and present moment to attenuate the intensity of her desire of performance.

7.4. Gunther

Gunther is now working within the SSE, but prior to his career change, he had few years of experience within the private sector as a consultant. At some point, he had to do a mandatory military service and to evade it, he was left with the choice of doing civilian service instead. During those two years of civilian service, he was put on a project of local economic insertion which was a system put in place in his country of origin within the city's political scheme to fight and prevent criminality. Since then, he remained in that universe of SSE.

As for his studies, he initially studied in economics and then went to management sciences in a management university. In his studies, he did a PhD thesis based on an anti-globalization model.

Gunther's journey had a bigger emphasis on the broader societal, economic, and ideological perspectives that corroborated with his current career path. His narrative contains an element of chance event that pushed him towards the SSE.

7.4.1. Early career

In Gunther's early career narrative, how he got involved within the SSE is described as mainly through coincidence:

- 1 **G4 Gunther:** Ben j'ai étudié en sciences de gestion à l'université dans une école de management,
- 2 École A. Donc tout m'orientait à travailler dans le privé. Mes premières expériences euh en
- 3 consultation étaient en privées d'ailleurs. Et euh j'étais en Pays A, il y avait le service militaire
- 4 obligatoire. Donc j'avais commencé ma thèse de doctorat mais donc j'avais repoussé toujours le le
- 5 service militaire, j voulais pas le faire de toute façon, mais là arrivé à ## ans, ils m'ont dit « Bon bah
- 6 là, y'a plus de recours possible, faut le faire. »
- 7 [...]
- 8 **G6 Gunther:** Donc j'ai essayé toutes les échappatoires pour pas le faire, et le seul truc qui me restait,
- 9 c'était un service civil. Donc l'objection de conscience est un service civil et c'est la voie que j'ai pris.
- 10 Et là j me suis retrouvé embarqué dans un truc qui s'appell- qui s'appelle un plan local d'insertion
- 11 par l'économie.
- 12 [...]
- 13 **G8 Gunther:** Donc c'est un dispositif en Pays A qui a été mis en place dans le cadre de la politique de
- 14 la ville pour euh lutter contre la délinquance et faire de la prévention par l'insertion économique. Donc
- 15 là j'ai découvert totalement un autre univers, j savais qu'il y avait de la pauvreté là comme tout le
- 16 monde euh mais je la côtoyais pas nécessairement. Là j me suis retrouvé au cœur pendant # ans.
- 17 [...]
- 18 **G10 Gunther:** Et et après et après j'ai pu j'ai j'ai plus jamais je suis toujours resté là-dedans quoi.
- 19 **G11 Kenny:** Waouh, alors quand vous avez commencé les la consultation dans le privé, ça a duré juste
- 20 quelques...
- 21 **G12 Gunther:** Ouais, quelques années #-# ans.
- 22 **G13 Kenny:** [...] de ce que j'ai compris, c'était surtout pour échapper de de de l'engagement militaire

23 que vous avez vraiment trouvé l'autre type d'emploi.
24 **G14 Gunther:** Bifurqué, bifurqué.
25 [...]
26 **G16 Gunther:** Ce n'était pas un choix volontaire encore une fois parce que y'avait rien qui me
27 destinait d'aller par là quoi.

In this extract, Gunther positions himself as having little agency over his career path due to being unaware of what was available to him. Before giving the reason how he ended up in the SSE, he prefaces with his educational background and says that “tout [l]’orientait à travailler dans le privé” (line 2). It is described in the passive voice which suggests an important amount of influence that the educational system had on his career opportunities. Also, when he escaped his military service to do civilian service, he uses the verbs “j’ai découvert” (line 15) and “j’me suis retrouvé” (lines 10, 16). These verbs imply that something was not in his sight of knowledge, and it was through a chance event that he learned about the possibility of having a career path within the SSE. Since civil service was “le seul truc qui [lui] restait” (line 8), it suggests that a significant life trajectory can be shaped by circumstances that leaves little place for agency and it made him “bifurqu[er]” (line 24) from the other type of employment in the private sector.

Nonetheless, when Gunther mentions that he chose the path to civilian service (line 9), the reason he gave for making this choice was that he wanted to escape mandatory military service. The implication is twofold. First, it portrays himself as being reactive to external pressure when faced with the obligation of the authority, citing that the military service left him no choice other than to do it (lines 5-6). Second, it paradoxically portrays him as resisting authority and social expectations as he finally used the conscious objection to a mandatory military service. On top of it, when observing the vocabulary as he says “j’avais repoussé toujours le le service militaire” (lines 4-5) and “j’voulais pas le faire de toute façon” (line 5), it shows that his resistance is also a critical stance against the system that did not align with his desire. When it comes to staying SSE after doing the civilian service, he mentions that it was not a voluntary choice and that nothing was destined to lead him there (lines 26-27), it presents the path towards the SSE as a resistance against the conventional trajectory.

Gunther was already aware that poverty exists, but he then goes on to say that everyone knows it (lines 15-16). This may be a hint of a critical perspective of the superficial engagement towards systemic issues that should go beyond mere acknowledgment and awareness. In his situation, he

then gives the precision that he did not experience poverty firsthand and then found himself right in the heart of it for few years (line 16). And afterward, he remained involved within the work related to SSE. This sequence of events allows Gunther to transform his previous positioning of being passively aware about societal issues to being actively involved in it. The physical distance from poverty can be used as a justification for being passive as it does not necessarily lead to action due to superficial awareness of knowledge. By commenting “comme tout le monde” (lines 15-16) on knowing about poverty, there is an assumption that his depth of knowledge on poverty at that time must be quite superficial since everyone already knew about it. Awareness can then be constructed as not being only an abstract acknowledgement (of poverty, for example), but as an experience that leads to discovering more than what everyone already knows.

7.4.2. Experience in private firms / Morality through antagonist positioning

Concerning Gunther’s experience in a private firm as a consultant, I asked how he found his work before going into the SSE. Already at that time, there was a dissonance between his professional activities and his growing skepticism about the sustainability of the economic system he was contributing to:

- 1 **G18 Gunther:** Bon, c’était bien, c’était des plans d’affaires, mais pour les boîtes privées, donc euh
- 2 un moment donné, puis Avant d’aller en gestion, j’étais en économie, j’aimais bien la macroéconomie.
- 3 Et en même temps, je me rendais compte, puis là on était dans les années ## là que déjà le système
- 4 allait dans le mur.
- 5 **G19 Kenny:** OK
- 6 **G20 Gunther:** Donc euh le le capitalisme porte en lui les éléments de sa perte. Staline a écrit euh
- 7 les capitalistes sont en train de tresser la corde avec laquelle on va les pendre.
- 8 **G21 Kenny:** Uh hmm
- 9 **G22 Gunther:** Donc déjà, je m’interrogeais à- à ce moment-là sur bah la finalité quoi. C’est bien de
- 10 faire de la consultation, d’accompagner des entreprises pour faire du profit mais dans quel objectif?

When working for the private firms, he mentions that he enjoyed macroeconomy (lines 2-3), but then he juxtaposes this statement with “Et en même temps” (line 3), followed by his realization that “déjà le système allait dans le mur” (line 4). It positions his professional identity within the private sector, that is based on doing things he is interested in (such as macroeconomy, business plans (line 1) and consulting (line 10)), in opposition with the betterment of society (line 10). His narrative encapsulates the questioning behind the meaning of work and by hedging with “mais

dans quel objectif?” it suggests that profit by itself is not a goal he is aligned with. Helping enterprises maximize their profits becomes morally questionable.

By bringing the temporality when speaking about his realization that the capitalist system was heading to disaster (“puis là on était dans les années ##” (lines 3-4)), it positions him as already critical during an era where capitalism is seen with less scrutiny. Although he does not explicitly identify as an anti-capitalist, he is overtly critical of the system. Then, he adds other temporal markers such as “déjà” and “à ce moment là” (line 9) to further indicate that he was ahead in his time in his thinking and does not conform just because a belief is more widely accepted. His stance towards that belief system is also a position of confrontation:

- 1 **G24 Gunther:** [...] Et et d’ailleurs ma thèse de doctorat elle est elle était euh basée sur un modèle
- 2 antimondialiste avec une finalité de meilleur partage de richesse et de préservation des ressources.
- 3 **G25 Kenny:** [...] quand vous avez fait votre parcours initial avec la gestion, c’était quand même
- 4 orienté dans la même euh dans les mêmes philosophies, si on veut dire de de la consultation, [...]
- 5 **G26 Gunther:** Ah bah c’était dans le modèle libéral carrément.
- 6 **G27 Kenny:** OK.
- 7 **G28 Gunther:** Pis j’avais même des des prises de bec un peu avec avec mes profs [rires]. Pour dire
- 8 bah. Pis i- ils nous ont appris toutes sortes de techniques euh au niveau financier, au niveau gestion,
- 9 au niveau ressources humaines. La pire, c’était la technique McNamara, c’est à dire comment gruger
- 10 le moral de quelqu’un pour le forcer à démissionner.
- 11 [...]
- 12 **G32 Gunther:** Je trouvais ça, je trouvais ça dégueulasse quoi.

Without me asking, Gunther casually (“et d’ailleurs” (line 1)) brings up his PhD thesis subject which was based on an anti-globalization with an end of sharing and preserving better the resources. It positions Gunther as being interested enough in environmental and societal issues and to criticize a dominant economic system. In his studies, the learning he received is qualified as in line with the liberal ideology model. By being anti-globalization and saying that he had a few quarrels with his teachers, he is presented as a figure that speaks against dominant models and authority. He also positions as having ethical consideration by naming a strong negative emotional reaction, disgust (line 12), towards the McNamara technique being taught at school, a technique used to force people to quit their work by eroding their morale.

When asked about the doubts Gunther had when he began his career transition, he speaks about his experience during his civilian service, and how the solutions he was part of, aiming to remediate poverty and delinquency, did not work:

1 **G40 Gunther:** [...] Donc y'a des quartiers où [les policiers] voulaient plus rentrer. Donc le seul moyen
2 de d'essayer de remédier à ça, c'est d'essayer de de créer euh ben ou d'essayer de créer parce que
3 en fait, ça s'avère que ça a pas fonctionné, mais d'essayer de créer une économie plurielle où chacun a
4 sa place plutôt que d'une confrontation d'un système libéral ultra capitaliste où les jeunes veulent pas
5 adhérer puis font tout pour euh pour créer des systèmes déviants.
6 [...]
7 **G42 Gunther:** [...] à distance là, avec le recul, ça a pas fonctionné.
8 **G43 Kenny:** Hmm k.
9 **G44 Gunther:** Ça veut dire que c'est même c'est c'est même compliqué là, maintenant y jettent des
10 frigos sur les flics, ils allument des incendies pour faire venir les pompiers pour les les les les caillasser
11 et tout et tout non donc. Si ça avait fonctionné, on aurait pas ça.

Further criticism and blame were put on the “système libéral ultra capitaliste” (line 4). It was framed that the dominant economic system can alienate the youth as they do not adhere to it. The system fails to accommodate as he mentions that it is confrontational (line 4). It provides further evidence to Gunther being positioned against capitalism and the approach it suggests as a solution to social unrest.

His past self may have been more willing to participate in those kinds of solutions, but he distances himself from that period where he already had doubts about the sustainability of the system. The element that suggests that he acknowledges a change in perspective is the use of a metaphor of physical distance: “à distance là, avec le recul, ça a pas fonctionné” (line 7).

7.4.3. Commitment and financial security

The following extract reveal a more nuance perspective on Gunther’s engagement within the SSE and the private sector. There is a dilemma between ideological commitment and financial security in which Gunther uses to justify in involvement in the private sector:

1 **G45 Kenny:** Mh hmm. Mais malgré tout, malgré cette difficulté, vous avez quand même l'intention
2 de rester dans le domaine actuel, c'est ça?
3 **G46 Gunther:** Ouais ouais ouais. Oh oui non, j'ai pas du tout envie de retourner bah j'a- j'ai toujours
4 gardé un pied quand même. Fau- fau- fau- faut être réaliste là, j'ai toujours gardé un pied dans le privé
5 tu vois.
6 **G47 Kenny:** OK, et qu'est ce qui garde euhm qu'est-ce qui vous garde dans le privé, qu'est-ce qui
7 vous garde dans le l'économie sociale?
8 **G48 Gunther:** (4) Bah l'économie sociale, c'est les valeurs là, c'est sûr. L'expertise
9 développée aussi. Puis le privé, c'est plus euh C'est que c'est pas un monde tout rose non plus
10 hein, l'économie sociale.
11 **G49 Kenny:** Hmmm
12 **G50 Gunther:** Notamment euh bah la les niveaux de rémunération sont pas sont pas folichons.
13 Y'a pas de retraite, ni quoi que ce soit, donc en fait le mon engagement dans le privé, c'est plus de
14 me garantir un système de retraite euh.
15 **G51 Kenny:** Hmm

16 **G52 Gunther:** Où j'ai continué de travailler, mais euh j'suis rendu à l'âge où j'dois me
17 questionner là-dessus, quoi.

More emphasis in his discourse is placed on the downside of the social economy and reasons for having a foot within the private sector. He begins by saying he does “j'ai pas du tout envie de retourner (dans le secteur privé)” (line 3) meaning there is something undesirable about the private sector which has to do with its value system. The answer given by Gunther to my follow-up question (lines 6-7) clarifies the differences that made him favour the SSE over the private sector, which is its values, meaning that the values of the SSE are of greater importance than those in the private sector. Nonetheless, he still has a foot in the private sector (lines 4-5) and proceeds to justify this action which implies that it is a less-than-ideal situation. To justify having a foot within the private sector, Gunther uses the perspective of realistic pragmatism regarding financial security. He says that the salary in the SSE is not so great, and there are not many benefits such as ensuring a good retirement plan (lines 12-13). Also, his justification is given more weight using his identity as an older person since he is “rendu à l'âge” where he needs to start ask himself questions about retirement (lines 16-17). This shows the power structure the discourse of financial security has over one's agency to fully embrace a career path within the SSE.

On the flip side, the values of the SSE are the things that keep him involved. No further explanation was provided as it was an obvious answer. Using the filler word “Bah” (line 8) indicates obviousness to the statement that followed and by saying “c'est sûr” (line 8) it further drives this idea. Gunther has also established a professional identity within the SSE that is used to demonstrate his interest to stay in the sector, but it is possible to sense that his assurance about his commitment to the values that the SSE carry is not entirely present. His compliments about the SSE are short-lived as he hedges with “c'est pas un monde tout rose non plus hein” (lines 9-10).

Following the question about the changes in his way of seeing life and confirmations about anything that I asked, his reply goes back into criticism of capitalism and the inevitability of the downfall of economic systems:

- 1 **G56 Gunther:** [...] tout ce que j'ai vu, ça confirmait que le système capitaliste allait dans le mur.
- 2 **G57 Kenny:** Mh hmm
- 3 **G58 Gunther:** Ça c'est clair. La réflexion, c'était de dire « bon d'toute façon, les effondrements font
- 4 partie des cycles civilisationnels. Les civilisations augmentent, gagnent et puis à un moment donné
- 5 s'effondrent. [...] Rome ça a pris 300 ans pour s'effondrer. [...] mais une fois que c'est effondré, on

- 6 fait quoi? Donc pour moi, l'économie sociale, c'est un moyen de recréer une nouvelle civilisation.
 7 Donc c'est pour ça que c'est intéressant de regarder là, j'me situe plus dans une perspective euh
 8 économique historique.
 9 **G59 Kenny:** Mmk.
 10 **G60 Gunther:** En disant peut-être que peut-être pas sûr, mais peut-être que l'économie sociale
 11 porte les valeurs de de du futur système de demain.

When speaking of the SSE, Gunther says that it was “a” way to re-create a new civilization and not “the” way (“l'économie sociale, c'est un moyen” (line 6)). Afterward, he is cautious about clauses of uncertainty as he says “peut-être” multiple times, adds another hedge “pas sûr, mais peut-être” the SSE carries the values of the future system (lines 10-11). As we will see, Gunther keeps a distance from fully embrace the identity of a profession within the SSE. Compared to other interviewees, he does not explicitly mention that the values of the SSE are aligned with his values, which may suggest less commitment and identification towards the SSE, but does not necessarily implicate lesser of an engagement:

- 1 **G61 Kenny:** [...] comment vous vous sentez à travers cette nouvelle réalité d'avoir plongé dans
 2 l'économie sociale et d'avoir resté là-dedans et de vouloir persister?
 3 **G62 Gunther:** Ben déjà, y'a le le le premier truc c'est euh qu'on se regarde dans la glace le matin là,
 4 c'est pourquoi on se lève, c'est quoi la finalité là de de se lever et puis le y'a un terme de la que qui
 5 définit pas mal la vie quotidienne d'une économie libérale, c'est la « rat race », la course du rat. Donc
 6 moi j'me situe pas dans cette perspective là. Et euh ce qui me motive là, c'est ça, c'est peut-être de
 7 faire partie d'un d'une solution à à quelque chose qui s'en vient et qui est inéluctable.
 8 [...]
 9 **G65 Kenny:** [...] e:t comment vous vous comment vous qualifiez euh ces valeurs-là [...] ?
 10 **G66 Gunther:** (4) J- je fais un petit temps d'arrêt là, parce que comme je disais, tout est pas tout est
 11 pas rose ou ou tout est pas encore calé, c'est à dire y'a des concepts là, le concept d'égalité, concept
 12 d'équité, moi j'suis plus sur un concept d'équité. Équité et égalité, ça veut dire tout le monde pareil,
 13 mais ça, ça tient pas compte de l'effort individuel.
 14 **G67 Kenny:** Hmm
 15 **G68 Gunther:** Équité, ça veut dire qu'on tient compte de l'effort individuel. Donc j'préfère un
 16 système équitable qu'un système égalitaire. Système égalitaire, ça te fait c'tait peut-être le le le
 17 l'aspiration du système communiste, ça a pas marché.

Gunther is positioned as being goal and vision oriented (visionary). What he does reflects the self as the metaphor of waking up and looking at yourself in the mirror (lines 3-4) is being used. He is quite introspective as he asks existential questions about the meaning of his life and why does he wake up in the morning, but there is uncertainty and doubt in this vision as previously mentioned since he is not fully committed to the SSE (we will see later in extract G106 his distancing from the positioning of a revendicator). Once again, he uses the marker of uncertainty “peut-être” to qualify his level of motivation towards the solution he is being part of (lines 6-7)

when it comes to fixing the eventual downturn of capitalism. What is more certain for Gunther is his opposition of certain life perspectives. For example, he opposes the “rat race” of a liberal economy (line 5) and the aspiration of an egalitarian communist system (lines 17-18). When speaking about the vision he opposes, he uses locationality to distance himself from the rat race: “j’me situe pas dans cette perspective là” (line 6). Throughout his discourse, there are many instances of positioning through opposition.

There is a strong involvement of the identity and individuality of Gunther in his aspiration since the self is physically present when he details his motivations. First, when speaking of the solution, he says that the thing that motivates him, is “peut-être de faire partie d’un d’une solution” (lines 6-7). Second, comparing equity and equality, Gunther says that he is more “sur (on)” (line 12) the concept of equity which signals his presence within his statement. He favours the concept that takes into account individual effort. Once again, an importance is given to the individual. Finally, a marker of his individuality is present when he explains that “[il] préfère un système équitable qu’un système égalitaire” (lines 15-16). It is noticeable since he frames from his own perspective rather than taking a third person tone and claiming that one system is better than the other. The following extract further highlights Gunther’s underlying belief system:

- 1 **G72 Gunther:** Euh dans les autres valeurs, bah c’est c’est l’entraide euh l’équité, la liberté. Euh j’suis
- 2 assez libertarien d’ailleurs dans dans ma pensée. Euh l- l- l’économie dirigée euh ou un gouvernement
- 3 des têtes bien pensantes nous disent comment on doit se comporter, j’adhère pas à ces valeurs là.
- 4 **G73 Kenny:** Uh hmm. Vous avez toujours...
- 5 **G74 Gunther:** ... Selon moi [paroles overlap avec Kenny]... la liberté est importante.
- 6 **G75 Kenny:** Mmk. Vous avez toujours questionné cette cette autorité.
- 7 **G76 Gunther:** Ouais. Ouais ouais ouais. Ça a commencé par le service militaire [rires].
- 8 **G77 Kenny:** [Rires] Est-ce que ça a forgé beaucoup votre façon de d’approcher la vie?
- 9 **G78 Gunther:** État soumission, oui.
- 10 **G79 Kenny:** OK.
- 11 **G80 Gunther:** J’aime pas me soumettre.

Individual freedom represents well Gunther’s underlying belief system as he explicitly says that he is “assez libertarien” (lines 1-2). How he positions this ideology is by opposition to authority as he follows with more details, not on what libertarianism entails, but on his gripe with the government telling us how to behave. He then expresses through negation his values as he does not adhere (lines 2-3) to authoritarianism and does not like being submissive (line 11). By

promoting the value of freedom and being against authority, Gunther positions himself as a proponent of individual agency.

7.4.4. *Legitimacy and critical thinking*

Gunther's advocacy to individual agency is done through critical thinking and by not blindly believing the mainstream belief:

- 1 **G85 Kenny:** [...] y'a quand même beaucoup de gens qui ne questionne pas nécessairement la
2 société, alors est-ce que c'était difficile de se retrouver dans ce genre de monde?
3 **G86 Gunther:** [...] Donc euh les y'a les grands courants de pensées majoritaires, puis y'a la
4 pensée un petit peu minoritaire discordante. Euh j'ai jamais jamais été revendicatif, c'est à dire que le
5 courant majoritaire, il pense ce qu'il veut j- j'm'en fous à la rigueur là, c'est euh, pour moi, y'a un- y'a
6 une loi de la nature qui est euh la loi de la causalité, c'est à dire que on récolte les fruits qu'on a semés.
7 On récolte le choix qu'on a fait. Puis des fois, c'est des choix conscients, des fois c'est des choix
8 inconscients, mais quand les gens s'engagent dans la voie majoritaire, ils vont récolter les fruits de leur
9 engagement. On le voit avec les systèmes de retraite, ça fait, j'me rappelle, j'ai des collègues là je leur
10 disais qui est un peu plus vieux que moi, qui aspirait aller à la retraite, je leur disais, mais c'est c'est
11 une illusion, quand t'arriveras à la retraite, tu verras, ils vont te décaler l'âge de la retraite parce que la
12 la courbe démographique fait que c'est le seul moyen, sinon les systèmes de retraite, vont sauter. Puis
13 c'est ça qui est en train de se passer par tous les réglementations euh politiques font en sorte de reculer
14 de l'âge de la retraite parce que les caisses de retraite vont sauter. Donc ceux qui sont resté engagés
15 dans ce système là en faisant confiance à la pensée majoritaire qu'ils auraient une retraite dorée et
16 cetera, sont en train de se rendre compte qu'ils se sont fourvoyés. Moi, j'ai mené mon truc parallèle...
17 **G87 Kenny:** Uh hmm.
18 **G88 Gunther:** ... pour me créer un autre système.
19 [...]
20 **G92 Gunther:** Après il faut regarder les le j'ai toujours une pensée critique.
21 [...]
22 **G94 Gunther:** Surtout par rapport à la pensée majoritaire. Si on regarde l'histoire de la retraite, la
23 retraite, ça a été inventée par Bismarck suite à la Révolution française de 1870 [...] où il disait « [...] je
24 vais leur promettre une pension à 60 ans sachant que la majorité vont mourir à 60 ans. » C'est comme
25 ça qui a été pensé, la retraite. Sauf que depuis Bismarck, l'espérance de vie est passée de 60 à 85, mais
26 on n'a pas réformé le système de répartition. Donc, c'est pas tenable.

I introduced the conversation by prefacing with the statement that there are a lot of people who do not necessarily question society. Gunther then reorients this topic on the presence of mainstream beliefs and the belief of the minority that is a bit defiant. He positions himself as part of the minority since he expresses that “[il s’]en fous à la rigueur là” (line 5) about the mainstream current, but he is also careful to not associate himself with the people who are radical after specifying that “[il a] jamais jamais été revendicatif” (line 4). It puts Gunther in a position where he is required to distance at the same time as justifying his positioning of being against the authority, within the minority, but not that type of minority that protests loudly. It does not imply in his case a passive acceptance, but rather a strategic approach to critique that can be achieved

through individual choices and holding under scrutiny the mainstream belief. This further corroborates his sense of individual agency as he turns to himself for a survival method: “Moi, j’ai mené mon truc parallèle [...] pour me créer un autre système.” (lines 16, 18).

Gunther establishes his legitimacy through a story where he was able to foresee the future that others did not believe in. In this case, his colleagues did not believe that the retirement system would break, suggested by him telling them it was an illusion to believe in the retirement system (lines 10-11). Then his prediction came to fruition as he says that “Puis c’est ça qui est en train de se passer” since the retirement age is being pushed back (lines 12-13). Through those examples and using historical examples, Gunther positions himself further as a critical thinker (line 20). One part of thinking critically for him seems to imply not blindly believing the masses as his story is a warning for blindly trusting the system. The consequence for trusting the majority led them to getting duped as they assumed their retirement will go as planned (lines 14-16). His criticism of following the mainstream belief also applies for the SSE:

- 1 **G100 Gunther:** Ouais ouais, mais en même temps, c’est c’est là où j’ai toujours aussi ma pensée
- 2 critique en disant « Bah c’est un beau mouvement, y’a des belles valeurs, et cetera. » Maintenant
- 3 c’est des humains qui sont derrière. Donc, des fois, l’économie sociale est dévoyée aussi.
- 4 **G101 Kenny:** OK.
- 5 **G102 Gunther:** Où on prend des directions que j’trouve pas heureuse nécessairement.
- 6 [...]
- 7 **G106 Gunther:** Bon, des fois, c’est des trucs à la con, mais euh le l- d- de vouloir recréer un schéma
- 8 de pensée uniforme dans le cadre de l’économie sociale
- 9 [...]
- 10 **G116 Gunther:** Alors qu’il faut garder de la flexibilité parce que les contextes vont évoluer dans un
- 11 sens de plus en plus difficile. Donc, si on se cantonne dans un mainstream, on aura du mal à
- 12 s’adapter au contexte changeant.

Through this criticism, Gunther expands on his position as a critical thinker by implying that it leads to being adaptable. He explains that unfortunately, the SSE is not necessarily taking a fortunate turn since it wants to recreate a uniform pattern of thinking (lines 5, 7-8). This is a problem for him as uniformity can lead to some rigidity which makes it harder to be flexible when contexts are evolving. A negative perspective on human nature is also at the core of his worldview since he expresses that humans are behind the movement of the SSE (lines 2-3). To provide the criticism of the SSE after explicitly saying he has his critical thinking, Gunther prefaces with the positive qualities of the SSE which can signal that he is able to see both the goods and the bads of the SSE. This contrast and comparison of perspective are used to provide more legitimacy to an

explicit positioning of critical thinker. Since he is a participant of the SSE, he was able to leverage his position as having an insider perspective to offer a nuanced critique.

7.4.5. Summary

Gunther's narrative on his journey is marked by an unexpected event that led him to a career within the SSE. Regardless of that change of career path, he did not appear to have changed his belief as his recollection of his previous identity remained quite constant throughout his storytelling. He was initially heading towards a career in the private sector as his academic background in economics and management oriented his choices, but his civilian services branched him off from the expected path. Gunther's little agency over his career path is suggested by the influence and the breadth of possibilities his education allowed him to have. Physical distance and superficial awareness is also used as a justification for the passivity of his past self. Once he had that unexpected experience that physically brought him to the societal issue of poverty and raised his awareness, it opened further possibilities of a career path for him.

The change of career path did not raise any recollection of a change in perspective within Gunther. He already had some restraints towards the work he's had within the private sector. There was a dissonance between his professional work and positive impact this work had on the economic system. This tension is presented as a conflict between his interests, for consulting and help enterprises make profit for example, and the morality of his line of work within the capitalist system. The questioning period about the righteousness of his work, at that time, plays a role in justifying their action. For Gunther, the implication itself due to the chance event became the motif for action. He remained consistent within his belief system.

Even during his education, he exposes himself as anti-globalist and against the authority, which is in line with his anti-capitalist perspective. Temporal marker was used to demonstrate the independence of his thinking at a time when it was even more difficult to believe what he believes now. It positions Gunther as a critical thinker who does not conform to the mass because it is more acceptable to follow the mainstream ideas. He is also presented as being principled who is able to speak his mind against the authority. His antagonist positioning towards authority and capitalism aligns typically with some of the values of the SSE, but paradoxically, he does not see himself as a rebel that can characterize advocates of the SSE.

As much as Gunther sees the SSE as maybe a carrier of the values of the future system, he distances himself from the direction it is taking, specifically the tendency to recreate a uniform schema of thinking. Gunther's identity as a pragmatist, critical and independent thinker, libertarian, is positioned at odds with the SSE. First, being a pragmatist, financial security and the age of retirement are used as justification for keeping a foot within the private sector as the work conditions of the SSE do not guarantee having a good retirement. Second, being an independent thinker, Gunther is cautiously advocating for the values of the SSE, to demonstrate that he does not blindly believe any form of ideologies. A strong emphasis is given to the individual freedom, the freedom to think and to find meaning for themselves (why one wakes up in the morning). To establish the legitimacy of his positioning as a critical thinker, Gunther is not taking both sides of the perspectives (pro SSE and pro-capitalism), but rather provides criticism to the SSE, the perspective he associates himself with, through his professional identity.

Overall, Gunther's career transition narration has been one about a shift in professional identity but did not require much distancing from his previous identity as he has always kept his apprehension towards forms of authority and domination both prior to and following his career transition. He remains nonetheless in a state where he remains cautious about fully embracing the image of a typical advocate of the SSE. Tension arises between his critical identity and the future he envisions for the SSE, which is a tendency to go towards conformity.

7.4.6. Table summary of subject positions

Subject positions	Examples	Interpretations
Doubtful about the profit motive	<p>G18: [...] Avant d'aller en gestion, j'étais en économie, j'aimais bien la macroéconomie. Et en même temps, je me rendais compte, puis là on était dans les années ## là que déjà le système allait dans le mur.</p> <p>G22: Donc déjà, je m'interrogeais à- à ce moment-là sur bah la finalité quoi. C'est bien de faire de la consultation, d'accompagner des entreprises pour faire du profit mais dans quel objectif?</p>	<p>Gunther said that he was already questioning the goal behind his work as a consultant and the profit motive. Within the context where he was speaking about the (capitalist) system hitting a wall, it positions him as skeptical about the dominant economic system.</p>
Authority challenger, quite libertarian,	<p>G28: Pis j'avais même des des prises de bec un peu avec avec mes profs [rires] Pour dire bah. Pis i- ils nous ont appris toutes sortes de techniques euh au niveau financier, au niveau gestion, au niveau ressources humaines. La pire, c'était la technique McNamara, c'est à dire comment gruger le moral de quelqu'un pour le forcer à démissionner.</p> <p>G72: j'suis assez libertarien d'ailleurs dans dans ma pensée. Euh l- l- l'économie dirigée euh ou un gouvernement des têtes bien pensantes nous disent comment on doit se comporter, j'adhère pas à ces valeurs là.</p>	<p>Having a few quarrels with his teachers, it positions Gunther as speaking up against authority regarding perspective he does not agree with and morally ethical in his perspective.</p> <p>The way it is presented also mirrors his description of his libertarian belief where he mentions that he does not adhere to the values of the government deciding on their behaviour.</p> <p>When choosing a future career, these moral convictions can serve as guiding principles. Later, he does explain that he has some restraints about the SSE that has the tendency of imposing a uniform thinking scheme (see G106).</p>
Realist	<p>G46: Ouais ouais ouais. Oh oui non, j'ai pas du tout envie de retourner bah j'a- j'ai toujours gardé un pied quand même. Fau- fau- fau- faut être réaliste là, j'ai toujours gardé un pied dans le privé tu vois.</p> <p>G50: Notamment euh bah la les niveaux de rémunération sont pas sont pas folichons. Y'a pas de retraite, ni quoi que ce soit, donc en fait le mon engagement dans le privé, c'est plus de me garantir un système de retraite euh.</p> <p>G52: Où j'ai continué de travailler, mais euh j'suis rendu à l'âge où j'dois me questionner là-dessus, quoi.</p>	<p>Having a foot in the private sector is presented as a realistic action to take. One reason used to justify that choice is to ensure financial security at retirement. It presents Gunther as pragmatic, and realist. His identity as an older person serves as a motif for staying involved in the private sector.</p>

<p>Not situated in the “rat race” perspective, motivated to be part of a solution</p>	<p>G62: Ben déjà, y’a le le le premier truc c’est euh qu’on se regarde dans la glace le matin là, c’est pourquoi on se lève, c’est quoi la finalité là de de se lever et puis le y’a un terme de la que qui définit pas mal la vie quotidienne d’une économie libérale, c’est la « rat race », la course du rat. Donc moi j’me situe pas dans cette perspective là. Et euh ce qui me motive là, c’est ça, c’est peut-être de faire partie d’un d’une solution à à quelque chose qui s’en vient et qui est inéluctable.</p>	<p>The answers to the existential questions Gunther brought up, such as the reasons for waking up in the morning, positions him as a visionary. But the meaning of visionary, within the context of the interview, it suggests that it may be about having a better system than the capitalist system. Also, he distances himself from the rat race. These positions him as desiring more humane activities rather than profit and productivity-oriented activities.</p>
<p>Critical thinker</p>	<p>G100 : [...] c’est là où j’ai toujours aussi ma pensée critique en disant « Bah c’est un beau mouvement, y’a des belles valeurs, et cetera. » Maintenant c’est des humains qui sont derrière. Donc, des fois, l’économie sociale est dévoyée aussi. [...]</p> <p>G106: Bon, des fois, c’est des trucs à la con, mais euh le l- d- de vouloir recréer un schéma de pensée uniforme dans le cadre de l’économie sociale</p> <p>G116: Alors qu’il faut garder de la flexibilité parce que les contextes vont évoluer dans un sens de plus en plus difficile. Donc, si on se cantonne dans un mainstream, on aura du mal à s’adapter au contexte changeant.</p>	<p>Gunther expresses skepticism towards mainstream ideas or belief (following the majority). Thinking all uniformly is described as hindering on the capacity to adapt to change. He says that the SSE has this tendency to recreate a uniform belief schema which positions him as wary of the direction the movement is going.</p>

7.5. Conny

Conny initially aimed to have a career in academics. While he was doing his PhD, he was also doing consulting within the private sector. Having a child, he decided to pursue work in consulting instead and left his academic path behind.

In his early career, Conny has been involved in a startup that failed which forced him to quit. Then, he went for a company as a project manager and after a year, he got bored and searched for new challenges and went back to another startup. That startup got acquired by another company, so he stayed in that company for multiple years as a consultant, where he eventually managed teams of people. Afterward, he went to a new company in the training industry.

Now, still in that company, Conny is considering starting his own non-profit. This non-profit would help smaller organizations within the cultural sector with their needs in using digital technologies. His vision of helping cultural organizations is a combination of his acquired expertise from his previous work experience, his interest in art and his disdain for profit-seeking behaviour.

7.5.1. *Early career*

Early on Conny's career path, he presents a dilemma he was confronted with. The choice he had to take put his desires at odds. This choice between continuing his academic pursuit and committing to the private sector in consultancy is presented as a moral decision:

- 1 **C8 Conny:** [...] initialement je voulais faire une carrière académique, donc je suis allé à
- 2 l'université, [...]. Puis quand je faisais mon doctorat, donc j'ai j'ai aussi fait de la consultation dans le
- 3 secteur privé, et il a fallu que je fasse un choix entre mes études doctorales et de la consultation dans le
- 4 secteur privé. Euh. La vie étant ce qu'elle est, donc il a fallu aller dans la dans le secteur privé parce
- 5 que j'avais un enfant et tout, puis je commençais ma carrière, donc y'avait un besoin d'argent et donc
- 6 ça c'était, à partir d'un moment où il y a eu ce choix-là, [...]

To provide a bit of context to this extract, Conny's depiction of the consulting space as morally questionable (as we will see later), allowed me to interpret his choice as less than ideal for him in terms of the moral implication. The rationale provided for his final decision to give up on his aspirations as the duty of being a parent (line 5), to be financially stable to raise a child, is implicitly presented as more important than his desire to continue his PhD. By saying that it was this need of

having money (line 5), it was the moment where he had to make a choice, suggesting that without this constraint, he might have not made a choice to sacrifice his aspiration. This sense of sacrifice is made apparent as Conny depicts this decision as a duty that transcended personal desire by saying that “il a fallu aller dans la dans le secteur privé parce que j’avais un enfant et tout” (lines 4-5). His role as a parent justifies the decision he made to go work as a consultant instead, which was not what he initially envisioned for his career.

At the same time, that identification with the moral implications of being a parent is presented as reducing his agency by having to make a choice instead of just doing what he wanted to do at that time. When it comes to his journey in his career, Conny paradoxically embraces his professional identity seeking challenges and being committed to his professional roles:

1 **C8 Conny** : [...] par la suite ma carrière j’ai commencé dans une start-up en en nouvelle, en
2 technologie web et dans cette start-up là donc on a travaillé comme des fous pendant # ans. Et puis ça a
3 pas marché et donc la start-up a fait faillite, donc à ce moment-là, j’ai été obligé de donc de de quitter
4 cette start-up là [...] et d’aller travailler dans le milieu de la consultation privée. Alors j’ai commencé à
5 travailler chez Compagnie A pendant un an en tant que chargé de projet, puis au bout de # an, je me
6 suis ennuyé chez Compagnie A, j’avais besoin de nouveaux défis, donc je suis allé travailler dans une
7 autre start-up, puis je suis resté # an, puis au bout de # an, cette start-up a été achetée par Compagnie
8 B et donc je suis resté après ## ans à Compagny B. [...] J’ai commencé donc en tant que conseiller
9 principal et ensuite, directeur conseil et directeur services-conseils, [...]

This extract illustrates the dedication Conny has towards his career. In his first startup experience, he says that “on a travaillé comme des fous pendant # ans” (line 2). His relationship with work was not presented as a means to financial security but as a form of personal challenge. Emotion and desire of challenges is used as motivators to change. For example, he was bored at Compagnie A and went to work elsewhere to seek new challenges. He expressed a need and then went to satisfy it (lines 5-6) suggesting an active participation in building his career. Then, by enumerating his multiple roles (project manager, consultant, director of consulting (lines 5, 8-9)) throughout his years of experience, Conny allows us to see him as an accomplished professional who was able to climb the corporate ladder. Throughout this discourse, Conny can be positioned as having agency to choose when to leave a company to strive for his desires for challenges (aside from the startup failure that forced him to quit instead) and when to stay within a company as he did stay ## years at Compagnie B (line 8).

Specifically speaking of his experience in Compagnie B, Conny sets up a narrative that links to his desire of starting a non-profit organization. The aspects he liked about his role during his career in the private sector are in line with the values he attributes to the non-profit sector:

1 **C8 Conny** : [...] et donc ce que j'aimais à Compagnie B dans mon rôle de de consultant, moi je ne
2 cherchais pas une on appelle ça une progression verticale. J'ai mis ce que j'appelle ça j'appelle ça
3 un cheminement horizontal, c'est-à-dire j'aimais toucher à différents domaines, [...]. Donc ça m'a
4 permis de travailler ver., horizontalement, et de développer des compétences avec différentes équipes.
5 L'autre chose aussi qui me plaisait, c'était de travailler avec le monde, c'était de travailler en équipe,
6 [...] et au fur et à mesure je me suis rendu compte c'est que je suis dans un milieu de techno, le milieu
7 de la techno de plus en plus, il est devenu très... diversifié, [...] on avait des équipes qui venaient avec
8 des gens qui venaient de différents backgrounds et ça, j'aimais beaucoup ça pour moi, parce qu'il y a
9 une très belle richesse, humaine en en soi, c'est drôle de le dire d'être dans une compagnie de
10 consultation, puis d'avoir un souci, effectivement d'une préoccupation qu'on rencontre des humains.
11 Et donc je trouvais ça super intéressant. [...], puis on parlait pas encore de diversité et d'inclusion, et
12 moi je le vivais avant les autres, donc d'avoir à gérer toutes ces équipes-là. Alors donc au bout d'un
13 certain moment donc je me suis dit après avoir beaucoup donné dans le milieu de consultation, je me
14 suis dit, je vais peut-être vouloir revenir dans le milieu de la formation parce que j'aime ça. Et donc
15 d'où l'idée effectivement d'aller rejoindre Compagnie C [...].

In this extract, Conny positions himself as going against conventional metrics of success and being motivated by humane values. First, he says that he was not searching for a vertical progression, typically understood as getting more important titles which comes with status and success, but rather a horizontal progression (lines 2-3). Second, he emphasizes on his interest in working with other people, especially with teams of diverse people as it brings human richness (lines 5-9). As previously mentioned about the negative representation of the consulting sector, Conny is aware of its negative connotation since he adds that “c'est drôle de le dire d'être dans une compagnie de consultation, puis d'avoir un souci, effectivement d'une préoccupation qu'on rencontre des humains” (lines 9-10). Saying something is funny is the feeling of irony as it subverts our expectations, in this case, having the attention towards other humans in a consulting firm. From that example, Conny adds a level of genuineness and authenticity to his humanistic motivations, as he presents himself as being interested in the principles of diversity and inclusion before it became a more widespread practice (line 11). This demonstrates a certain innateness to his motivation as not being externally influenced.

Another aspect of his professional motivation is to pursue what he is interested in. It conveys a sense of agency as it expresses his capacity to change job based on his interests. Little insight

was given to his experience at Compagnie C, but his narrative from his experience at Compagnie B is coherent with his intention to start a non-profit as it shares some of the values of the SSE:

1 **C8 Conny** : [...] . Et aujourd’hui, après avoir rejoint Compagnie C et d’avoir, Donc là, je réfléchis tu
2 vois l’année prochaine de partir une OBNL, [...] pour aider en technologie l’ensemble du secteur
3 culturel, parce que je me rends compte comme dans le milieu culturel, spécifiquement les théâtres, les
4 compagnies de danse, je parle pas des artistes euh qui sont des stars mondiales, pas du tout, mais des
5 des petits théâtres ici et là, [...], et y’ont beaucoup, beaucoup de difficultés aujourd’hui euh à tirer du
6 monde sur, alors avec la pandémie, ça a été vraiment très dur pour les artistes, donc ce que je me dis
7 c’est de mettre en place une OBNL qui va venir en aide technologiquement... [...] pour avoir une
8 meilleure dir., découvrabilité parce qu’il f., y faut qu’y se fasse connaître, il faut qu’y se fasse
9 découvrir et donc, [...] ce qui me plairait c’est vraiment de les aider là-dedans, dans ce sens-là, alors je
10 suis beaucoup en réflexion par rapport à ça, donc c’est un petit peu le cheminement tu vois : longue
11 carrière en consultation. J’ai fait plein de projets, j’ai j’ai fait des j’ai, j’ai j’ai géré le site web, la mise
12 en place du site web de Compagnie C mondialement, j’ai travaillé sur les architectures de commerce
13 électronique de Compagnie D. Tout ça, c’est bien beau ça, c’était le trip, c’était, mais à côté, tu as un
14 multitude de de, de petits organismes, et cetera, qui ont beaucoup de difficultés à trouver des
15 ressources et en plus que quand ils trouvent des ressources, parfois ça coûte très cher, ils comprennent
16 pas ça veut dire quoi des technologies, donc, l’idée c’est vraiment d’accompagner ces organismes-là,
17 euh... Puis à travers une OBNL, c’est-à-dire l’objectif c’est pas faire de l’argent et vraiment de de de
18 de de développer quelque chose qui va leur permettre de de se sentir écouté, de se sentir accompagné,
19 d’avoir eu., tu vois ce que je veux dire, je suis pas là à être money-maker, c’est pas l’objectif de faire
20 de l’argent, c’est vraiment de les aider à régler leurs défis, leurs problèmes et puis de leur trouver les
21 ressources qui vont permettre qui vont leur permettre d’y arriver.

By saying that he is making the realization that smaller cultural organizations and companies are having difficulties, especially during the pandemic (lines 3-6), Conny discursively engages in a transition in his professional motivations. This new knowledge signals an evolution in his level of awareness about the issues lived by smaller cultural organizations which was the reason that prompted him to think about starting a non-profit (lines 1-3) to help them fix their problems and their technological challenges (lines 7, 20-21). Conny describes the situation with an impersonal imperative to convey a sense of urgency and need, “il f., y faut qu’y se fasse connaître, il faut qu’y se fasse découvrir” (lines 8-9), and he would be glad to help them with this issue of discoverability. His observation of an issue and his desire to resolve the problem align with the typical “hero’s journey” where he is there to help fix the problem.

How Conny wants to fix the problem is through the means of a non-profit and this is how it relates to the humanistic values he reported from his experiences at Compagnie B. He rejects the position of “money-maker” in favour of contributing positively to the cultural sector. His professional identity, that took pride in working in a diverse and inclusive environment and not seeking traditional success metrics, shifted towards the success metric of positive impact towards

helping those in needs without exploiting them (see C14). In this case, those in needs are the smaller cultural organizations.

He also distances himself from his past career that accumulated many technical experiences on many projects by helping bigger company, for example on a global scale. He does so using the metaphor of a trip (line 13) as a trip is momentary. Working on those projects are represented as ephemeral interest based on this metaphor and hedging that all those projects, “tout ça, c’est bien beau ça, c’était le trip, c’était, mais à côté, tu as un multitude de de, de petits organismes, et cetera, qui ont beaucoup de difficultés à trouver des ressources” (lines 13-15). There is a judgment of greater importance of helping those in difficulties, thus minimizing his prior experiences on big projects.

7.5.2. Ethics of consulting

Reflecting on his consulting career, Conny presents a moral and ethical framework for his work in consulting. The framework is based on his observations of questionable practices from other consultants:

- 1 **C11 Kenny:** [...] comment t’en es arrivé à vouloir consultation?
- 2 **C12 Conny:** Ben écoute, consultation, j’ai pas eu le choix, c’est qu’en fin de compte, au niveau du
- 3 doctorat, ils m’ont mis de la pression pour que je fasse un choix, j’avais une pression familiale, et
- 4 cetera, donc il fallait gagner de l’argent, et cetera donc (rires) puis j’aimais ça la consultation, c’est à
- 5 dire moi, c’était pas de la consultation, c’était aider les gens, je. Quand je suis, quand je dis que je suis
- 6 consultant, oui, moi, dans ma manière d’être, je suis plutôt quelqu’un qui veut aider que quelqu’un qui
- 7 veut faire de l’argent. Donc j’ai jamais eu le le principe de me dire, je veux faire de l’argent, non, mon
- 8 idée, c’était, je veux aider et je veux être très transparent ou... Moi j’ai toujours dit que un bon
- 9 consultant c’est quelqu’un qui qui, qui, qui permettait à une compagnie de régler son problème le plus
- 10 rapidement possible. Moi, j’ai connu des consultants qui restent dans une compagnie des dizaines
- 11 d’années parce que parce que là ils sont bien, ils sont confortables et puis l’argent rentre. Moi non, moi
- 12 si moi c’était pas dans mon idée de rester des dizaines et des dizaines d’années chez un client, c’est
- 13 d’aider un client, régler un problème, mais puis à ce moment-là on passe à autre.

To drive the point back regarding Conny’s agency, he expresses a total lack of agency when he had to between pursuing his PhD and consultancy. He explicitly says that he “j’ai pas eu le choix” (line 2). He puts blame on the external pressure by being the passive recipient in the first clause (“ils m’ont mis de la pression pour que je fasse un choix” (line 3)), but when speaking of the familial pressure, he is positioned as the active subject experiencing the pressure (“j’avais une pression familiale (line 3)). In the end, after conveying that he was forced to go into consulting,

which minimizes his regards to that sector, he specifies that he liked consulting. Knowing that Conny is critical of the consulting industry as we progress in the interview, it seems fitting that he had to justify his choice to go down that path. His justification takes the form of the reframing of the consulting profession in terms of its moral implications, which is to help people (line 5).

From there, Conny proceeds to create a distinction between what is a good consultant from what is a bad consultant. In his depiction of ideal consulting practices, he uses strong adverbs such as “toujours” and “jamais”. For example, “Moi j’ai toujours dit que un bon consultant c’est ...” and “ j’ai jamais eu le le principe de me dire, je veux faire de l’argent, non” (lines 7-9). It demonstrates an intensity in his moral conviction and the consistency of his conviction throughout time. As we will see throughout the interview, seeking profit is often presented as a source of unethical work practices:

- 1 **C14 Conny:** [...] on me le reprochait parce qu’en fin de compte, on me disait « oui, mais écoute, faut
- 2 que tu dures le plus longtemps possible ». Non, je, je ne veux pas créer un besoin qui n’existe pas. Très
- 3 souvent les les consultants créent des besoins, moi c’était pas « je veux créer un besoin », je veux aider
- 4 un client et là une problématique, [...] l’idée c’est de de lui trouver une solution qui va lui permettre
- 5 qu’on va résoudre le plus rapidement possible, à moindre coût. L’idée, c’était toujours de le faire le
- 6 moins cher possible, ça veut pas dire en moins bonne qualité, le moins cher possible, le plus
- 7 rapidement possible. [...] J’étais déjà dans ce mindset-là. [...]

Conny establishes his legitimacy of being morally driven by presenting the criticism of others towards his consulting practices. Even after being called out for not staying long enough at a client in a project, to generate more profit by creating a non-existent need to stay longer (lines 1-3), Conny continues by standing up against that practice: “Non, je, je ne veux pas créer un besoin qui n’existe pas” (line 2). He follows his claims by naming a bad practice and how he would rather approach this situation. When explaining his idea of quickly solving the client’s problem, without compromising on quality and for the least amount of money, he explains that he was already in that mindset (lines 4-7). Using the temporal marker “déjà” (line 7), he adds to his legitimacy by positioning his past self as already espousing the practices of a good consultant. He then demonstrates further his allegiance to the non-profit sector:

- 1 **C18 Conny:** [...] en étant une OBNL, donc donc tu travailles pas dans un souci d’être une compagnie
- 2 rentable, tu, y’a une gestion saine, même les OBNL ont la responsabilité, parce qu’en fin de compte,
- 3 les compagnies de danse, les compagnies de théâtre, sont toutes des OBNL hein, [...] à part celles qui
- 4 sont très importantes ou je sais pas quoi, ça, si tu prends Véronique Cloutier, Louis Morissette ou ou
- 5 Guy A.Lepage, et cetera, là, pour moi, ça, on n’est plus dans le milieu de, dans le milieu culturel que je

6 cible, là on est dans le milieu du entertainment. Donc pour moi c'est complètement différent. [...] je
 7 suis en train de démarcher l'association A, [...] puis ces auteurs-là francophones de Province A ont
 8 besoin d'être, d'avoir d'être découverts, d'être exposés au monde, mais ils n'ont pas les moyens. Et la
 9 technologie pourrait les aider, mais s'ils vont voir un consultant, ben ça va coûter une beurrée, ben y'a
 10 des choses qu'on peut faire pour eux avec des, aller leur chercher des subventions, de les aider, de les
 11 accompagner dans ce sens-là. Donc c'est vraiment de de de promouvoir la culture francophone ou fr.,
 12 ou, oui francophones, non seulement au Québec, mais aussi à l'échelle du Canada. Donc, y'a cette
 13 volonté-là effectivement, [...] C'est dans ce sens-là, donc aujourd'hui je me dis « pourquoi ne pas faire
 14 ça parce qu'effectivement y'en a qui sont laissés pour compte », alors donc je trouve que c'est
 15 important de les aider.

By representing what a bad consultant would do if they were hired, Conny can position himself in opposition to profit-seeking behaviour (being profitable (lines 1-2) such as charging an exorbitant rate (line 9). Then he establishes a direct identification with his targeted audience, the non-profit sector. Presenting as an in-group member of the non-profit sector, by emphasizing on being a non-profit and then explaining that dance and theatre companies are non-profit as well (lines 2-3), Conny legitimizes once again his authenticity. He also legitimizes his anticipated work by providing a concrete action of asking his target audience (lines 6-7) to presumably get to know more about their needs.

Conny differentiates himself from much more prominent players in the space, which he categorizes as the entertainment industry (lines 4-5). The bigger names imply that they also have a greater budget and so far, Conny has mentioned the difficulties of the culture sector due to their lack of funding. Some of them are presented as victims by Conny since he says that “y'en a qui sont laissés pour compte” (line 14). He then judges that it is important to help them (lines 14-15) which reinforces his hero narrative. Then, using the temporal marker in “donc aujourd'hui je me dis” (line 13) to describe the importance to help the francophone authors, it suggests a shift from the past and a turning point where his reflections translate into actionable thoughts and commitment to his ideas. The focus on the present also conveys a sense of urgency.

7.5.3. Motivation and freedom

Asking Conny about the origin of his interest for the cultural sector and Francophonie, he explains his personal relationship with people from those sectors:

1 **C20 Conny:** [...] Puis le milieu culturel j'ai toujours aimé la culture, donc ça c'est, moi, dans ma
 2 famille enfant, on aimait la culture, puis on avait des gens dans notre fami., dans ma famille, qui étaient
 3 des gens du milieu de la culture, puis à la fois, donc c'est c'est y'a une sensibilité, pis on sait que c'est

4 pas facile, c'est beaucoup d'appelés et très peu d'élus, puis on le voit clairement et aujourd'hui autour
5 de moi, j'ai plein d'amis qui sont issus du milieu de la culture aussi, donc je je vois combien pour eux
6 c'est difficile de joindre les 2 bouts, et cetera, tu sais on pense que la culture c'est les Justin Bieber, et
7 cetera, moi je connais plein de de de danseurs, de gens de théâtre, et cetera, qui ont beaucoup de
8 difficultés, voilà (rires).

He always loved culture and explains that there are family members who are within that sector (lines 1-3). Causality is established as he says, “donc c'est c'est y'a une sensibilité” (line 3), suggesting that the proximity of relationships, either friends or family, contributed to the attachment to the cultural sector. He sees the difficulties of making ends meet (lines 5-6) and the adverb used when he says, “puis on le voit clairement” and the temporal marker “aujourd'hui autour de moi” (lines 4-5) adds once more to the sense of urgency.

The following extract surrounds the theme of opportunities and the motivations that Conny sees in the path he envisions by being a non-profit within the cultural sector:

1 **C21 Kenny:** Wow alors, c'est pour ça que maintenant, ben tu l'as toujours réalisé, mais c'est plus
2 maintenant que tu dis « Ah c'est le bon moment » ou y'avait d'autres facteurs qui a peut-être contribué
3 au changement?
4 **C22 Conny:** [...] je veux dire dans dans la vie c'est y'a du win-win, tu sais tu, euh, très souvent on dit
5 « Ah oui, je vais voir un client, c'est win-win », je pense qu'ici je vais trouver du win-win pourquoi?
6 Parce que je me rends compte, je te vais donner un exemple, hein, je vais travailler avec un une
7 compagnie de de danse. Ben ça va me permettre, paradoxalement, moi j'aime ça apprendre de
8 nouvelles choses. Je vais pouvoir peut-être parler de réalité augmentée et de réalité virtuelle, appliquée
9 à la danse. Donc, j'aime l'innovation, c'est quelque chose qui me plaît, sauf que quand je, quand on est
10 dans un organisme lucratif, l'innovation elle est ciblée, « Ah oui, le projet faut qui soit rentable, il faut
11 ceci, il faut cela. » Si je pars une OBNL, si je pars une OBNL, je peux aller chercher des subventions,
12 d'innovation, qu'on va pouvoir utiliser, et aider une un, une compagnie de danse. [...] à la fois ça me
13 permet de combiner ma curiosité intellectuelle, j'suis un gars de techno, avec une vocation de dire, de
14 venir en aide ou d'apporter des solutions à des organismes à but non lucratif, [...]

Although there is uncertainty introduced in his discourse (“je pense” (line 5), “je vais pouvoir peut-être” (line 8)), Conny describes the circumstances as a “win-win” situation (lines 4-5). It presents Conny as a person that seeks opportunities and the criteria that fuel his choices is an alignment of personal interests and needs of others. The example he provides of working with a dance company, where he can fulfill his intellectual curiosity and bring a solution to non-profit organizations, demonstrates the mutual benefits of achieving the two criteria. Furthermore, by being a non-profit organization, Conny conveys a sense of agency in his discourse, the freedom from constraints and freedom of choice. For example, the constraint he would be free from, is the

need to be profitable (“le projet faut qui soit rentable, il faut ceci, il faut cela” (lines 10-11)). Then, the new options he gets is to find subsidies (“je peux” (line 11)).

When asking about his freedom specifically, before even completing the intervention, Conny speaks about his financial freedom:

- 1 **C25 Kenny:** C’est ça, maintenant, c’est... T’es tu sens plus libre de de
- 2 **C26 Conny:** Ben, je me sens plus libre exactement. J’ai j’ai, je je dis pas que je roule sur l’or, mais je
- 3 suis pas dans la misère, tu comprends ce que je veux dire, puis tu sais je veux dire aussi dans le
- 4 cheminement de carrière, surtout, c’est, la pandémie a été un élément déclencheur. Pourquoi? Ben je,
- 5 j’ai, j’avais beaucoup, j’ai beaucoup de gens que je connais dans le milieu culturel y’ont eu beaucoup
- 6 beaucoup beaucoup d’misère. Et là je me dis, il f., il faut les aider d’une manière ou d’une autre. Donc
- 7 je pense de cette manière-là, amener ma petite, à mon échelle de manière très très symbolique de les
- 8 aider effectivement à à attirer, je veux dire, tu sais je veux dire, quand quelqu’un sort de l’université en
- 9 technologie ça intéresse pas d’aller travailler et faire du développement technologique qui va aller, il va
- 10 dire « Ah, moi, je vais aller travailler chez Compagnie X ou je vais aller travailler chez Compagnie Y
- 11 ou je vais aller travailler », je sais pas qui, chez, dans une grande organisation, ça lui viendra pas à
- 12 l’esprit de vouloir travailler là-dessus [...]

Financial freedom is the first thing that he speaks about on the topic of being free to do what he wants. It ties back to his initial decision to go towards private consultancy over his academic career to achieve financial security. But he downplays the importance of money on his career change, saying that “je dis pas que je roule sur l’or” (line 2). He does not deny either that it can be a contributing factor after hedging that “mais [il n’est] pas dans la misère” (lines 2-3). What he does not downplay is the contribution of a chance event towards his career change, explaining that it was “surtout” (line 4) the COVID pandemic that was a catalyst (see C54 also). The reason he provides is that it was a moment where he was able to witness, due to his proximity with people from the cultural sector, the distress they had during that period.

Another aspect Conny downplays on is his impact in the grand scheme of things. As much as he has spoken about the importance to help those in the cultural sector and given the sense of urgency, he mentions that his contribution would be on a small symbolic scale (lines 6-8). This intervention brings a realism to the heroic nature of his narrative and an awareness that he can only go so far with what he can help with. When expressing his ideas, he also presents self-awareness:

- 1 **C29 Kenny:** Uh hm et ça a été bien perçu quand même je suppose?
- 2 **C30 Conny:** Ah ben oui, t t t, tout le monde trouve l’idée extraordinaire aussi hein. Tout à fait. Bah,
- 3 extraordinaire, intéressante et tout, après tu sais, je veux dire, le dire c’est une chose, le faire c’est autre
- 4 chose hein. Walk the talk. Tu vois ce que je veux dire? Mais bon, mais un cer., mais c’est c’est c’est

5 d'avoir ce plaisir-là. [...]

After talking about the praises he received from everyone (line 2), he humbles himself by acknowledging that just talking about what he plans to do is not enough because it does not equate doing (lines 3-4). Using the expression to “walk the talk”, he taps into the widespread idea that actions speak louder than words.

7.5.4. *Future goals*

I reflected on Conny's past experiences in consulting and told him that his prior knowledge acquired from his work will probably help him a lot now. He agrees and projects his future professional identity:

- 1 **C32 Conny:** Absolument, tout à fait. Là là-dessus, sur le métier, j'ai aucun problème 1) Je j'ai j'ai été
- 2 formateur, je suis formateur, tu vois, j'ai donné des cours à l'université à des programmes d'MBA où
- 3 j'étais en face, donc, de gestionnaires, et cetera, donc accompagner, je peux, j'aime pas le mot coach
- 4 hein, moi il me plaît pas le mot coach, mais je je préfère être un mentor parce qu'un coach, c'est
- 5 comme quelqu'un qui te qui prend une distance, moi non, je veux pas prendre une distance, je veux
- 6 accompagner, puis aider les organisations à faire les bons choix. Donc, et alors qu'un coach, il t'en, il
- 7 te parle de quelque chose, mais il se mouille pas moi. Moi c'est sûr que je vais me mouiller, parce que
- 8 je veux que ça arrive [...].
- 9 [...]
- 10 **C38 Conny:** [...], je j'en ai vu, j'ai sondé, je j'ai passé des entrevues, j'ai j'ai questionné comme j'ai
- 11 dit parce que je connais plein de monde. [...]

First, he establishes his legitimacy through his past experiences of being a trainer and giving courses to managers for MBA programs (lines 1-3). Second, using proximity statements such as “je veux pas prendre une distance”, “accompagner”, (lines 5-6), he demonstrates his willingness to participate and dedicated to the cause, not just a bystander looking from afar. The metaphor of getting wet (line 7) accentuates his commitment to the cause on top of saying that “[il] veux que ça arrive” (lines 7-8). Third, he enumerates the list of action he already took so far (lines 10-11) meaning he is already doing part of the walk about his talk. All these definitions, such as what it means to be a coach, what he would do and not do, are projections of the identity he would have once he starts his non-profit as they are the expression of his desires (“je veux” (lines 5, 7-8)). Overall, in this extract, Conny particularly puts a great focus on his legitimacy by his physical presence, through the vocabulary of proximity, and the presence of self, through the expression of his desires and interests.

Regarding his desires, Conny wanted to do this work in the cultural sector for a long time. This extract ties back to the pandemic being a catalyst for starting his career transition process, or for the least, pushing further his reflection to change career:

- 1 **C53 Kenny:** Ouais et tu te sens comment à travers ce processus actuellement?
2 **C54 Conny:** Très bien... Ah non, mais c'est ce que je voulais, hein, je je pense, c'est ce que je voulais
3 depuis longtemps. Puis regarde, je te dis la pandémie a été vraiment ce qu'on appelle un catalyseur. 1)
4 premièrement, je me suis rendu compte que je pouvais travailler avec du monde de n'importe où sans
5 être présent physiquement parce que une des choses auxquelles on est confronté dans le milieu de l'art,
6 c'est que les gens ont très peu de temps (rires). [...] L'autre point, c'est que je me suis rendu compte
7 que moi, ce que je cible c'est pas uniquement le Québ., c'est à l'échelle du Canada. [...] Et OBNL,
8 c'est important. Non, mais c'est drôle hein, mais je tiens à la dimension OBNL parce que je trouve que
9 on est l'objectif, ce n'est pas d'être commerciale, [...] Parce que dès que tu tu tu te dis que c'est
10 l'argent qui prime, donc à ce moment-là tu fais des, tu fais des concessions, euh, y'a des choses qui
11 sont pas correspondent pas à mes valeurs comme je le disais tantôt, moi, jamais je vendrais un client
12 quelque chose dont il n'a pas besoin, ou je lui vendrais quelque chose en disant « il va être captif. » Tu
13 vois ce que je veux dire? J'en je le ferai jamais, donc l'idée c'est vraiment, c'est d'être dans la relation
14 de confiance, et dans, ben d'être dans les, dans les l'aide et l'entraide de il faut amener.
15 **C68:** « mais moi ce qui me pue au nez c'est de dire je vais me faire de l'argent sur le dos de gens qui
16 qui ont de la... »

Conny wanted to do this since a while, but he did not do it until the COVID pandemic happened. This chance event is used to justify the call to action. He often says that “[il s’est] rendu compte que” (lines 4, 6-7) which suggests a moment of epiphany about his circumstances and that contributed to bridge the gap between his desire to help in the cultural sector and to start doing something about it. Specifically, the reasons Conny gives as to why it was a catalyst are the work conditions and opportunities the COVID pandemic provided to him. The first aspect is the possibility of working with anyone across the globe and the second aspect is that his target audience is not only in Quebec, but also across Canada (lines 4-7). This narrative positions Conny as someone practical and visionary.

Then, he speaks of the importance he dedicates to being a non-profit, straying away from commercial purpose as putting money first leads to concessions that do not correspond to his values (lines 8-11). It positions him as being ethical and that being a non-profit allows the possibility of aligning his desires and his values. Strong negations are used to reinforce this positioning as he says that he will “jamais” (lines 11, 13) carry out questionable practices that puts his clients in trouble. He also uses strong sensorial imagery to express his disgust towards the idea of him to take profit over other people’s back (lines 15-16).

In the actions he took to bring his ideas to fruition, he spoke to a representative about having a platform to share their technological knowledge as they do not have one and he reported the interaction he's had with the lady:

- 1 **C62 Conny:** [...] si c'est pour ça que je leur parlais, je leur ai dit « Si vous avez une plateforme »
- 2 écoute, faut aller voir la dame elle avait les yeux gros comme ça, elle me disait « Ah wow, Conny ça
- 3 serait tellement génial ». Donc tu vois, y'a de l'intérêt, y'a de l'intérêt. [...]

By quoting the interest expressed from his target audience, Conny adds more legitimacy to his proposed solutions. Even if he previously spoke about his personal interests in technology, he externalizes this interest using a generalized repeated statement that “y'a de l'intérêt” (line 3) in the solution he is proposing.

7.5.5. Summary

Conny's initial career choice is framed as a moral dilemma that puts in conflict his familial responsibilities and his own personal aspirations. The way he presents his final decision to do consulting in the private sector, that is as a less than morally ideal option due to the profit motive, made it appear that it was a sacrifice he had to do. His role as a parent, requiring financial security, justifies the choice he had to make. Based on his discourse, this constraint reduces his agency to make the choice that is ideal to him.

As he speaks about his work experiences, he describes it positively. Throughout his career experiences, he presents a person with a strong work ethic, committed to challenges and looking for professional growth in terms of acquiring knowledge and pursuing his interests. It suggests the agency to choose a work that is interesting to him. On the other hand, he says that he is not so interested in achieving conventional success such as obtaining higher positions in the hierarchy, although he has climbed up the corporate ladder. This narrative conveys a consistency in Conny's moral perspective based on his humanistic value system. To legitimize his identity as morally driven and humanistic, he uses temporal markers to express his longstanding perspective. Also, he presents this perspective as not being influenced by current external pressure or trends on diversity and inclusion which suggests authenticity in his claims.

Then, regarding his desire to change career path to help within the cultural sector, although he expresses later in the interview that he wanted to do that since a long time ago, Conny uses the COVID pandemic, a chance event (unforeseen occurrence), as a catalyst to taking the first steps towards that transition. The pandemic is said to have made him realize that organizations within the cultural sector had a more difficult time dealing with the circumstances. Using impersonal and imperative statement, he conveys urgency, and it calls for a solution that he will be offering. The COVID pandemic also made him realize about new possibilities such as being able to work from home and to provide his help across Canada. By externalizing the problem as coming from the organizations he spoke with, and sometimes positioning them as victims, Conny's narrative is reminiscent of the hero narrative where is there to help them. At the same time, he exhibits realism to the heroism by downplaying the importance of his impact as he is only contributing on a symbolic scale.

In his ideal of starting a non-profit organization, Conny projects the future professional identity he would have. He does so by distancing himself from what he considers as a bad consultant, using his observations and perspective as an insider since he was a consultant himself. This projected professional identity is one of an ethical consultant that will not let the profit motive lead to the exploitation of his clients. Free from the constraint of having to be profitable by being a non-profit, Conny conveys a greater feeling of agency in his discourse.

To establish the legitimacy and authenticity in his claims, he puts a strong emphasis on being a non-profit himself and saying that the clients he will serve are also from the non-profit sector. Then, he enumerates a list of actions he already took towards his goals. The proximity of relationships he has with people from the cultural sector is also contributing to a sense of genuineness of his desires to help them.

7.5.6. Table summary of subject positions

Subject positions	Examples	Interpretations (à voir si nécessaire)
Parent	<p>C8: « [...] La vie étant ce qu'elle est, donc il a fallu aller dans la dans le secteur privé parce que j'avais un enfant et tout, puis je commençais ma carrière, donc y'avait un besoin d'argent et donc ça c'était, à partir d'un moment où il y a eu ce choix-là »</p> <p>C12: « [...] Ben écoute, consultation, j'ai pas eu le choix, c'est qu'en fin de compte, au niveau du doctorat, ils m'ont mis de la pression pour que je fasse un choix, j'avais une pression familiale, et cetera, donc il fallait gagner de l'argent, et cetera donc (rires) »</p>	<p>Role as a parent and external pressure used to justify the career path that favors financial security.</p> <p>Needing financial security reduces languages that suggests agency over his choices.</p>
Challenge pursuer	<p>C8: « [...] j'avais besoin de nouveaux défis, donc je suis allé travailler dans une autre start-up, puis je suis resté # an, puis au bout de # an, cette start-up a été achetée par Compagnie B et donc je suis resté après ## ans à Compagnie B. [...] J'ai commencé donc en tant que conseiller principal et ensuite, directeur conseil et directeur services-conseils, [...] »</p>	<p>Takes the initiative to respond to his needs (for new challenge) and take an active part in building his career. It demonstrates that he takes career decisions based on his interests.</p>
Interested in the aspect of helping others in consulting	<p>C12: « [...] puis j'aimais ça la consultation, c'est à dire moi, c'était pas de la consultation, c'était aider les gens »</p>	<p>Reframes what it means to do consulting. It constructs a continuity in his humanistic perspective which serves as a bridge between his past experiences and current desire to start a non-profit. It provides legitimacy to his claims.</p>
Ethical consultant	<p>C14: « [...] on me le reprochait parce qu'en fin de compte, on me disait « oui, mais écoute, faut que tu dures le plus longtemps possible ». Non, je, je ne veux pas créer un besoin qui n'existe pas. Très souvent les les consultants créent des besoins, moi c'était pas « je veux créer un besoin », je veux aider un client et là une problématique [...] J'étais déjà dans ce mindset-là. »</p>	<p>Standing up against those who told him to squeeze more dollars out of his clients by staying longer. He said that he does not want to do that and used a temporal market to express that he was already in that mindset. It suggests that he is ethically driven, and that drive is consistent throughout his career.</p>
Not a money-maker	<p>C8: « je suis pas là à être money-maker, c'est pas l'objectif de faire de l'argent, c'est vraiment de les aider à régler leurs défis, leurs problèmes et puis de leur trouver les ressources qui vont permettre qui vont leur permettre d'y arriver »</p> <p>C54: « je tiens à la dimension OBNL parce que je trouve que on est l'objectif, ce n'est pas d'être commerciale, [...] Parce</p>	<p>Distances from profit-seeking behaviours. Denies the goal of making money.</p> <p>Strong emotional language to express his disgust in the idea of profiting from other people.</p>

	<p>que dès que tu tu te dis que c'est l'argent qui prime, donc à ce moment-là tu fais des, tu fais des concessions, euh, y'a des choses qui sont pas correspondent pas à mes valeurs comme je le disais tantôt, moi, jamais je vendrais un client quelque chose dont il n'a pas besoin »</p> <p>C68: « mais moi ce qui me pue au nez c'est de dire je vais me faire de l'argent sur le dos de gens qui ont de la... »</p>	
Mentor and committed (future professional identity projection)	<p>C32: « [...] je préfère être un mentor parce qu'un coach, c'est comme quelqu'un qui te prend une distance, moi non, je veux pas prendre une distance, je veux accompagner, puis aider les organisations à faire les bons choix. Donc, et alors qu'un coach, il t'en, il te parle de quelque chose, mais il se mouille pas moi. Moi c'est sûr que je vais me mouiller, parce que je veux que ça arrive [...]. »</p>	Removal of physical distance and metaphor used to suggest his active participation and commitment to helping others. It is a projection of the identity he desires to have in his future career.

7.6. Floch

Floch got a bachelor's in marketing administration and had to decide between going into tourism or international trade. Even if he's had a bit of experience within the tourism industry during his studies, he finally chose to study in international trades. It is during that work experience he got exposed to forms of coops he was not aware of. Afterward, he was accepted in both the bachelor's in tourism and the master's in global trade and chose the latter despite his experience close to the tourism industry.

After graduating, he worked for a theatre company within the cultural sector and eventually went abroad to work within indigenous communities. Following his experience abroad, Floch came back in Québec and worked for a private firm specialized in culture and tourism. Through this experience, he got exposed to the SSE as many of his clients were non-profits.

Eventually, he took an opportunity in Montreal as a director of a community service organization, followed by another opportunity, but at a network of coops. Since then, he stayed involved within the SSE.

7.6.1. *Early career*

In an email that Floch sent to me, he mentioned briefly that he had work experience in marketing consulting, and I brought it up as I questioned him about the reasons that made him chose his initial career path until his career transition. Right in the beginning of his narrative, he presents a moment where he had to make a choice:

- 1 **F2 Floch:** D'accord, ben c'est intéressant que tu m'amènes là-dessus, ça va me [rires] ramener à
- 2 l'époque. [...] j'ai fait un premier bac en marketing, administration marketing à l'époque, c'est à
- 3 l'Université A en Ville A, et euh et par la suite bon ben je j'ai terminé mon bac je pense ##### donc tu
- 4 vois [rires] ça fait quand même un bon bout de temps. À ce moment-là j'étais ben y'avait deux
- 5 solutions de choix qui se se se se se m- se dessinait devant moi, ben soi que j'allais poursuivre ma
- 6 formation, j'avais deux domaines de d'intérêt, j'avais le tourisme et j'avais le commerce international.
- 7 [...]

By putting himself in the passive voice that “y'avait deux solutions de choix qui se [...] dessinait devant [lui]” (lines 4-5), he diminishes his sense of agency (or control) over the situation. This presents his career trajectory as somehow predetermined and unraveling in front of him as he

moves forward which can serve to attenuate the counter-intuitiveness of the choice he made as we will see later. This lack of agency can imply that he was reactive to opportunities rather than proactively seeking them. On the other hand, he presents these choices as in being line with his interests, which shows that he was seeking to pursue a career based on his interests, thus suggesting a form of agency over his career path.

He then goes on a side note on a work he did while he was studying. He mentions how that experience was relevant regarding his career transition. It provides insights into how Floch described the influence of past work experiences on his career choices even if it does not lead to an immediate change:

1 **F2 Floch:** [...] Et bon ben en temps je travaillais un petit peu quand même là euhm et ce qui m'a
2 amené aussi c'est vraiment ça a un lien là, c'est pour ça que je le mentionne, c'est que, ce qui m'a
3 amené par exemple vers le tourisme, ben c'est parce que j'ai j'ai l'été avant de terminer ma dernière
4 année du bac, j'ai participé à un projet qui était le démarrage d'une coopérative dans le milieu du plein
5 air et du tourisme et du plein air [...]. Donc là, on était vraiment là dans les les premiers
6 babulsinements si on veut là de l'organisation et la structuration du tourisme au Province A dans la
7 forme un peu comme on la connaît actuellement. Donc c'était assez nouveau pour moi, j'avais jamais
8 vraiment entendu parler d'une coopérative à savoir autre que Desjardins ou les producteurs agricoles là
9 mais jamais dit « Ah ça s'applique dans d'autres secteurs d'activité, c'est intéressant » etc. donc ça ça a
10 été un premier premier déclic, mais qui s'est pas concrétisé dans le sens que j'ai pas poursuivi mon
11 emploi avec eux, ça a été un emploi d'été et puis après ça j'suis j'suis retourné à mon année d'études
12 [...]

Once again, this experience working on a project to start a coop is described in a passive voice (“C’est [...] ce qui m’a amené par exemple vers le tourisme” (lines 1-2)) suggesting that work experiences led him to go towards a certain choice instead of him seeking that type of work. It highlights the unpredictability of career paths since factors that influence one’s career path can come from unexpected circumstances. He describes the outcome of the situation as a “premier déclic, mais qui s’est pas concrétisé” (line 10) which underscores the non-linearity of his career transition as one event does not lead to an immediate consequence. The metaphor of a “déclit” is a reference to a locking mechanism, and in this case, it suggests that an element towards the path of SSE was already present in him, but there are multiple influences that kept it locked and out of reach. Working on the project to start a coop was the first step to unlock this possibility as he never really heard of a coop other than Desjardins or agricultural producers (lines 7-8). This discovery that a coop exists in other sectors was a moment of learning as he mentions that “c’est intéressant” (line 9). Nonetheless, he did go back to pursue his studies.

Although Floch chose the option to go towards a master's degree in global trade despite the experience in tourism he's had, he still demonstrates a commitment to his decisions:

- 1 **F2 Floch:** [...] J'ai été accepté au bac en tourisme pis j'ai été accepté à la maîtrise en commerce
- 2 international à l'Université A. Pis là je devais choisir entre les deux, j'ai choisi le commerce
- 3 international, j'ai fait ma maîtrise en gestion internationale des entreprises à l'Université A et [...] moi
- 4 j'ai axé ma concentration sur le marketing essentiellement, et donc j'ai évolué là-dedans pendant toute
- 5 ma maîtrise et quand je suis sorti de ma maîtrise ben c'était la recherche d'emploi évidemment et je je
- 6 je cherchais à travailler dans l'international si on veut, et pour faire une histoire courte, j'ai travaillé
- 7 pour une compagnie de de théâtre québécoise qui fait de la tournée internationale [...], c'était pas
- 8 nécessairement une entreprise privée au sens inc de la chose mais c'était une entreprise culturelle. [...]
- 9 J'ai fait ça quand même un p'tit bout de temps pis après ça j'ai évolué. [...]

This choice may have been counter intuitive as his prior experience in tourism was noteworthy enough for him to go on a tangent earlier in the interview. The passive voice employed thus far may have served as a defense of this decision, but nothing really suggests some sort of shame in his choices. He simply presents his choice to study in global trade.

Saying that he as been accepted in both programs at the university, Floch presents himself as someone capable with opportunities (lines 1-2). Agency is present throughout this extract as he committed to his choice to go into global trade (lines 2-3). Then, he uses the active voice to describe the actions he took in that timeline. For example, he said that "j'ai axé ma concentration" (line 4), "je cherchais à travailler dans l'international". The work he took after his studies is presented as somehow distant from the private enterprise as it is a cultural enterprise. It shows his understanding of the SSE as not only a matter of whether an enterprise is within the private sector or not. Nonetheless, he still distances himself from his past identity by saying that "[il a] évolué" (line 9), suggesting that he has become more mature since, notably due to his experience of working abroad:

- 1 **F2 Floch:** [...] J'suis parti à l'étranger vivre deux ans en coopération internationale en Pays A et en
- 2 Pays B. [...]
- 3 **F4 Floch :** [...] pis j'ai travaillé b- avec des communautés autochtones de là-bas, dans le domaine de
- 4 l'art toujours dans la culture, commercialisation de leur art, c'était des communautés autochtones qui
- 5 avait qui développaient euh différents produits artistiques et artisanat donc, je j'ai aidé à structurer un
- 6 peu la commercialisation de ces produits, [...]

Floch's experience abroad working with indigenous communities positions him as someone who values cultural awareness. By saying that he worked "avec" (line 3), rather than simply saying

he helped, it provides more a sense of collaboration from him rather than a hero positioning. Also, it reinforces his commitment to the cultural sector as he mentions that it was “toujours dans la culture” (line 4). The work he took afterward was still in the cultural and tourism sector:

- 1 **F4 Floch** : [...] puis j’suis revenu au Province A pis là j’ai travaillé pour une entreprise privée [...], et
- 2 c’est une firme qui était dont les opérations était pas québécoises étaient spécialisées dans le marketing
- 3 de la culture et du tourisme. [...]. Et tu vois tout de suite la nature là j’suis j’suis jamais très loin de
- 4 l’économie sociale, la plupart des clients c’est souvent des des entreprises à buts non lucratifs ou des
- 5 petites entreprises du milieu culturel ou du milieu touristique. Donc ça m’a fait un peu vivre euh
- 6 comme pos. comme euh posture de consultant, le contact avec l’économie sociale, et... [...] fait que là
- 7 je me suis mis à parler à des gens du milieu des Réseau de coopératives A à l’époque [...]
- 8 [...]
- 9 **F4 Floch** : [...] là je fais le lien avec mon expérience, j’m rappelle que j’avais vécu une expérience
- 10 dans le domaine du tourisme qui était une coopérative, fait que j’m dis « Tiens, y’a peut-être là une
- 11 structure intéressante qu’on pourrait utiliser », puis j’ai travaillé à ce moment-là avec, à
- 12 l’époque c’était les gens du Réseau de coopératives A [...]. Puis là on a proposé la coopérative pis là
- 13 j’m suis vraiment investi dans la la structure du modèle, bien comprendre pour bien le faire
- 14 comprendre aux clients, pis ben regarde, c’est comme ça que moi, j’suis, j’suis pas mal tombé là-
- 15 dedans mais j’étais encore à l’emploi de cette entreprise-là pendant un certain temps [...]

His narration touches on a significant pivot towards the SSE using language of proximity to highlight this aspect: “j’suis jamais très loin de l’économie sociale” (lines 3-4). He also exposes engagement within his work as his vocabulary suggests agency since “[il s’est] mis à parler à des gens du milieu des Réseau de coopératives A” (line 7). Since the interview is about career transition towards the SSE, it is possible that Floch finds connection between his experience and the topic, which brought him to say to “[faire] le lien avec [son] expérience” that is to work with a coop (lines 9-10). Using that experience, Floch positions himself as genuinely invested since he quotes himself in the past being interested in the structure of that organization (“Tiens, y’a peut-être une structure intéressante qu’on pourrait utiliser” (lines 10-11)). It presents him as someone dedicated and the use of a strong adverb highlights the extent of his dedication (“j’m suis vraiment investi dans la structure du modèle” (line 13)).

Then, his discourse presents the situation as a chance event that led him to discover this part of the SSE that got him invested. By saying that “[il est] tombé là-dedans”, it suggests that he did not control how he would end up in that situation. It is also the same element of chance discourse that is employed when talking about his job switch:

- 1 **F4 Floch** : [...] j’ai, j’ai fait le switch un moment donné où j’ai eu l’opportunité parce que je
- 2 déménageais à ce moment-là la l’entreprise était à Ville B je déménageais à Ville C et la

3 l'opportunité était de me retrouver un emploi sur Montréal et cette recherche-là m'a dit m'a m'a amené
4 à aller vers le milieu de l'économie sociale. J'ai été à ce moment-là plus dans le milieu communautaire
5 que le milieu de l'économie social pendant longtemps j'ai été directeur de l'Organisme A à Ville B
6 où là, je me suis vraiment j'ai vraiment baigné dans le milieu des services communautaires des services
7 à la communauté, dans ce cas-ci c'était relié à l'accueil et l'intégration des nouveaux arrivants. Et et
8 donc j'ai fait ça pendant ouf au moins # ans. Puis après ça ben j'avais une autre opportunité c'était
9 d'aller à à Ville D pour diriger le Réseau de coopératives de Région B à ce moment-là. Donc ç. je
10 revenais un peu à des z. des zones que j'avais connu, puis ça m'a vraiment c'- c'est là que ça a
11 propulsé disons euh mon ma carrière dans l'économie sociale que je n'ai pas quitté depuis depuis #####
12 j'te dirai là où j'suis vraiment plus dans l'économie sociale avant ça c'était un 5 ans dans le milieu
13 communautaire. [...]

Since Floch mentions that he was never too far from the SSE, his career switch to the community service economy is casually presented by the vague temporal marker “un moment donné” (line 1). There is not a moment of realization that was spoken about or any descriptive that transpired an abrupt change.

His agency is presented in a paradoxical way in this extract. He says that he had an opportunity and that opportunity brought him to the SSE (lines 1-4). Then, this job search, meaning that he actively participated in finding the opportunity, led towards the SSE which was in the passive voice. How he speaks of opportunities suggests a modest perspective on his agency. Instead of saying that he sought the opportunity or created those opportunities and brought himself towards the direction he wanted to go, it is rather framed as things that came to him (“j'ai eu l'opportunité” (line 1), “j'avais une autre opportunité” (line 8)). There is an element that is out of his control through this formulation, but he was able to act on the opportunities that were offered to him.

When he mentions that he took the opportunity to direct the “Réseau de coopératives”, he mentions that it made him go back to zones that he knew before. This moment is described as the situation that pushed his career in the SSE (lines 9-13), which suggests that a direct involvement within the SSE (not by having clients from the SSE) played a role in his commitment towards the SSE as he explains that “[il n'a] pas quitté (l'économie sociale) depuis [...] #####” (line 11).

7.6.2. Decision-making process and values

When I asked Floch about the reasons that made him choose marketing and global trade rather than tourism, Floch's response suggests the complexity of career decisions where personal interests, experiences, opportunities, and perceptions about other cultures intersect:

1 **F5 Kenny:** [...] est-ce qu'il y a quelque chose qui vous avait fait choisir plutôt le le marketing puis les
2 le marketing international si je me trompe pas, plutôt que le tourisme?
3 **F6 Floch:** Ouais, c'est une excellente question en fait... Je pourrais pas te dire qu'est-ce qui a été le
4 déclencheur peut être que, moi le tourisme ce qui m'intéressait beaucoup c'était le tourisme de plein air
5 et d'aventure parce que j'avais eu mon expérience dans la coop et tout ça pis je me disais « Ah, tiens,
6 y'a vraiment un un une opportunité là de développer des projets intéressants dans des communautés
7 t'sais de qui sont ancrés dans le territoire pis ça m'intéressait beaucoup ». La question du marketing, du
8 marketing international, ben là j'étais beaucoup plus dans la question de y'avait la question culturelle
9 beaucoup qui m'intéressait t'sais c'était pour moi comment, comment adapter ou s'adapter à une
10 culture et et de faire cheminer une offre, par exemple de produits ou de services qui est adapté à la
11 culture pour et et pour moi y'avait là-dedans un élément de d'intérêt personnel aussi, pis d'intérêt de de
12 de de toujours de de d'apprendre d'être dans un milieu où on est stimulé, c'est pas juste, c'est pour ça
13 que la le commerce international moi ça m'attirait beaucoup, notamment le marketing international je
14 je me voyais beaucoup dans cet aspect de comment adapter une offre à une culture pour qu'elle
15 réponde sensiblement à la c'est pas juste d'arriver là un peu comme pis c'est la posi- la posture des
16 québécois versus les Américains, tu sais on a, je pense que dans notre commerce international, on a une
17 une sensibilité qui est fait un petit peu plus, plus présente que les Américains qui arrivent probablement
18 plus avec leurs gros sabots dans le marché pis ils disent « [inaudible : ben moi ça] on a le meilleur
19 produit au monde, buy it or leave it. » Nous c'est [inaudible] on se garde une petite gêne un peu plus,
20 on arrive, on essaie de comprendre « qu'est-ce que qu'est-ce qui vous plaît, qu'est-ce qui vous plaît
21 moins, on va l'adapter, parfait. » On a un peu cette idée de on est moins on a moins ce réflexe-là de
22 peut-être de pas avoir de point de vue peu importe je sais pas, fait que c'est ça, c'est un peu ces
23 éléments qui que j'pourrais nommer mais t'sais j'te j'te j'te j'te partage ça, mais j'ai jamais fait de la
24 réflexion plus approfondie que ça.

Floch's comment before answering, "Je pourrais pas te dire qu'est-ce qui a été le déclencheur" (lines 3-4), suggests that his interpretation on what constitutes a transition is understood as possibly requiring a catalyzing event. In other words, there is an expectation of some sort of trigger that will cause a change. But in this case, Floch expresses that he is unable to say what was the triggering event. Reflecting further, he says that he was really interested in tourism and outdoor, and his reflection on his interests was already centered around the community and culture ("y'a vraiment un un une opportunité là de développer des projets intéressants dans des communautés" (line 6)). Even during his studies, that were focused on marketing and global trade, he presents himself as interested in using the knowledge in marketing to adapt sensibly an offer for a culture (lines 12-15). The discourse surrounding his interests and the essence of SSE demonstrates some level of natural alignment between the two, and by expressing that "[il a] jamais fait de la réflexion plus approfondie que ça" (lines 23-24), it suggests that he did not require some form of change of heart that led him to realize some deeper interests that were connected to the SSE. This connection was always quite present, and he was already submerged in that sort of environment.

To represent the sensitivity he spoke about, Floch puts in contrast the cultural identity of Quebecers and the identity of Americans. Through this discourse, he aligns himself with the

culture of Quebecers which he represented as having more cultural sensitivity and adaptation, contrary to the American approach which is more imposing of their vision (lines 15-19).

Then, we delved deeper into the differences he observed throughout his different jobs and into the questions that gradually led him to make this transition towards the SSE. This extract is where Floch speaks explicitly of values and where it may come from. This interaction on his values builds an identity that has moral principles:

1 **F12 Floch:** [...] y'a peut-être le cliché de d'un travail qui est, disons, le travail avec des humains qui
2 tient en compte qui tient en compte pis qui prend en considération l'humain dans son ensemble pas
3 juste comme comme un consommateur, mais comme partie prenante qui qui qui a aussi une vie,
4 une culture, donc pour moi ça a toujours ça m'a toujours habité je pense. C'est peut-être mon éducation
5 familiale je je j'en sais rien peut-être sans doute. Euhm une forme d'ouverture sur le monde, qui qui,
6 qui, qui a toujours qui, qui a toujours été présente là dans dans, dans mon environnement, familial
7 d'abord, bien entendu Euhm... ouais, c'est une excellente question euhm ça ça a été pas mal tout le
8 temps présent c'est ce ce facteur-là. Euh, je pense aussi la question, il faut que le travail ait un sens, pis
9 la question du sens, ben, c'est un reflet de tes valeurs personnelles. Donc, qu'est-ce qui fait du sens
10 pour moi ne fait peut-être pas nécessairement du sens pour pour toi et pour quelqu'un d'autre, donc, ça
11 ça prend un certain temps avant de de matcher tes valeurs avec le travail pis de dire « ben c'est
12 vraiment dans ce sens-là que je veux contribuer ou que je veux avoir l'impression de contribuer. »
13 Après ça ben, y'a d'autres facteurs d'autres considérations qui t'amène à choisir un emploi. J'aurais
14 très bien pu aller travailler pour une entreprise multinationale dans le département marketing et cetera
15 euh j'aurais pro- j'aurais gagné probablement mieux ma vie et mais probablement qu'après un certain
16 temps, je me serais senti fatigué et je j'aurais eu j'aurais voulu ch. évoluer vers quelque chose qui est
17 en qui résonne mieux au sens de mes valeurs t'sais.

Uncertainty markers are often used by Floch such as “peut-être”, “je pense”, “j'en sais rien peut-être sans doute” (lines 1, 4, 5). These markers may indicate that his reflections are nuanced rather than definitive prescriptions. When it comes to the sources of influences on his values, those markers highlight a process of upbringing that may have not been really questioned for Floch and that he did not experience a strong emotional or intellectual questioning surrounding his belief system. He explains that taking into consideration the human in its entirety “[l']a toujours habité” (line 4), “ça a été pas mal tout le temps present [...] ce facteur-là” (lines 7-8). His familial education is speculated as one of the contributing factors to his open-mindedness (lines 4-5). This narrative showcases the extent to which Floch's humanistic value system is deeply rooted within him (suggested by using the adverb “toujours” in “ça m'a toujours habité je pense”, “a toujours été présente là [...] dans mon environnement, familial” (line 4, 6)) and it is accentuated by taking into consideration that the things that makes sense to him may not be applicable to other people (lines

9-10). This detail positions him as considerate of others' opinions, which is in line with the values he espoused so far.

When it comes to the theme of work, Floch highlights the importance of aligning work with personal values. It then constructs work as an extent to his personal identity, but to a lesser extent in the past as he mentions that “ça prend un certain temps avant de [...] matcher tes valeurs avec le travail” (lines 10-11), meaning that there may be a period of disconnect between your work and your values. Also, the meaning that work provides to him may be altruistic in nature since he formulates it as a contribution (line 12) rather than something that only benefits him such as personal fulfillment or the feeling of improving oneself. On the other hand, his statement brings a nuanced view as it may be rather the desire to feel like he's contributing towards something (line 12) which may not be as altruistic since it is a personal fulfillment. There is some sense of self-awareness due to the way he frames this desire as he says that “[il] veut avoir l'impression de contribuer” (line 12) which means that what we think is bringing a contribution is not necessarily having the intended impact.

Applying his work outlook in his personal situation, Floch provides an alternative career path he could have pursued – working for a multinational company – which would have presumably offered him a better salary (lines 13-15). However, he speculates that despite greater financial gain, he would have been fatigued and would have wanted to evolve towards a work that resonates better with his values (lines 15-17). Projection of negative emotional reaction is used to reinforce his commitment to his current career path in the SSE. Then, saying he would eventually evolve (line 16) lets us suppose that he would go through periods of personal growth and self-discovery. This statement also creates a hierarchy in moral values. Although he does acknowledge that what makes sense for him may not make sense for other people (lines 9-10) which demonstrates a restraint in judging others' values. To evolve implies improvement which creates a tension between accepting others' subjective values and judging them through a hierarchy of values. Overall, Floch's reassessment of “what could have been” presents him as someone pursuing authenticity. It constructs his identity as a person who makes decisions based on deeper conviction rather than for purely economic gain.

Away from hypothetical scenario, Floch makes a comparison of his actual situation to those of people he knows by acknowledging the divergence in their career path and the impact on their lifestyle. In his narrative, he highlights the compromises of the career path he chose:

- 1 **F14 Floch:** Ouais ben pis si je regarde dans mon groupe de finissants mettons en gestion international,
2 moi la plupart des gens que j'ai côtoyés, allés aux études aujourd'hui, ben ils travaillent pour la plupart
3 dans des grandes entreprises, pas juste au Province A mais à l'étranger, puis, ils ont une vie beaucoup
4 plus... je dirais pas de Jet-Setter, mais beaucoup plus... à une échelle différente de la mienne [rires].
5 **F15 Kenny:** Aha ok!
6 **F16 Floch:** Mais ceci étant dit, c'est aussi ça fait partie aussi des choix que l'on fait. Est-ce qu'on les
7 assume, au début, peut-être un peu, après ça on les remet en question. Y'a toujours l'effet de
8 comparaison aux autres, ça vient on y échappe pas, mais à partir du moment où on a fait un peu le le
9 le le ménage de tout ça dans sa tête et dans sa vie aussi, ben on on arrive, je pense, à avoir une forme
10 de, de de paix mentale ou de quiétude qui dit « Ben oui, j'suis j'suis vraiment dans mon environnement
11 de travail, je suis vraiment dans mon élément là où je suis, le ou je sens que je contribue le plus » et je
12 dis tout le temps peut être de façon cliché, mais moi une partie de mon salaire c'est c'est quand je vois
13 que le le groupe que j'ai accompagné l'entrep. l'OBNL ou la coop ou ou je vois que ça ça fait un, ça
14 fait une différence, ça a contribué et ça leur a permis d'avancer ou ça a permis de régler une
15 problématique, donc, t'sais je j'peux faire tantôt une fusion entre deux OBNL, j'peux faire tantôt un
16 plan une planification stratégique # ans avec un centre, un centre de recherche d'emploi à Ville E,
17 t'sais, j'peux faire, t'sais fait que j'va j'va j'va avoir des mandats qui d'intervention dans des groupes,
18 dans des collectifs, puis quand je vois le résultat à la fin ou le livrable, puis je vois là satisfaction ben
19 pour moi, c'est c'est très satisfaisant, j'ai l'impression d'avoir fait mon travail de façon professionnelle,
20 rigoureuse, j'ai probablement pas le même chèque de paye que mon copain qui est dans sa boîte en
21 informatique et qui et qui et qui se tire nettement un meilleur salaire que moi, mais j'ai au moins, sinon
22 plus, la satisfaction que lui, t'sais.

Floch first compares with his peers who work in bigger enterprises and reluctantly express that their lifestyle is more akin to jet-setters (lines 3-4), suggesting a more glamorous or traditionally successful life. He softens the comparison, mitigating a direct criticism and envy using a neutral formulation by saying that their scale of lifestyle is different from his (line 4). Criticism of socially desirable career outcomes takes an implicit form by using neutral vocabulary to compare his lifestyle and those who took a different career path.

To justify his choice, he uses emotional concepts such as mental peace and quotes himself by using reaffirmation statement about being in the right environment and being in the right element (lines 9-11). This metaphor of mental peace also leaves the place to interpret that the path he took to get there underwent periods of conflicts. Furthermore, he enumerates the benefits he provides to himself and to those he helps through his work. For example, he mentions that he feels a satisfaction in the work he does, having the agency to use his skillset (“j’peux faire tantôt une fusion, [...] j’peux faire tantôt [...] une planification stratégique, [...], j’peux faire [...]”) (lines 15-

17). He explains that his work results in being able to see his client's problems solved (lines 13-14) and the use of the verb "voir" presupposes a question of perception.

However, those benefits are presented as the caveat of sacrificing salary. These benefits could have been provided as is, but both time the salary was spoken about, he mentions that a cut in salary is the price to pay for the satisfaction he obtains from his work : "moi une partie de mon salaire [...] c'est quand je vois que [...] ça fait une différence" (lines 12-15), "j'ai probablement pas le même chèque de paie que mon copain [...] mais j'ai au moins, sinon plus, la satisfaction que lui" (lines 20-22). This trade-off presented by Floch gives an insight into prioritizing intrinsic motivation over extrinsic motivation and the importance he gives to non-monetary compensation.

In the following extract, Floch lays out explicitly what society values, which he considers the traditional path of the majority he is distancing himself from and reformulates the importance of personal fulfillment and social contribution:

1 **F20 Floch:** [...] j'te partage ça en disant « C'est pas, c'est pas, c'est pas facile » et ça ça prend un
2 certain temps parce que la société dans laquelle on évolue est une société qui valorise à, qui valorise un
3 peu la, ce qu'on appelle l'avancement tu sais, l'avancement de la carrière, qui valorise une forme
4 d'accumulation, bon voici les étapes classiques, je sors des études, j'ai une job, je rencontre quelqu'un,
5 j'ai des enfants, j'ai une maison, j'ai un poste qui augmente, je déc. je suis à c'est bon, je suis membre
6 d'un club de golf, bref, on a on arrive dans dans une société et puis on nous, on nous en tout cas, dans
7 le cheminement des carrières aujourd'hui, si on le prend par le bout de l'université, souvent on a. on a.
8 on arrive vers un peu cette ce modèle-là, qui est un peu le modèle qu'on nous présente de façon, en
9 majorité peu importe. Donc, forcément, t'sais on on on s'exclut pas de la société dans laquelle on est,
10 donc oui, on est on est souvent, on se compare on se compare aux autres on se compare aux amis on se
11 compare aux aux membres de notre famille, et cetera, mais, mais oui c'est ça, c'est c'est ça prend un
12 certain temps avant de de de dire « oui, j'suis confortable avec le choix que je fais, oui j'assume
13 totalemment et si je l'assume, c'est pas non plus une souffrance, mais bien plutôt que j'ai trouvé ma voie
14 en en lien avec mes valeurs et ce que j'aspire en termes de de de contribution », tu sais, puis après ça
15 ben, tu sais, on change pas le monde, mais nous ce qu'on ce qu'on dit tout le temps un peu à la blague
16 entre nous, mais oui, on change le monde une coop à la fois, c'est à dire que, puis, ça c'est pas le
17 courant majoritaire, mais, quand on voit la le sourire, la banane dans dans la, dans le visage de la
18 personne en face de nous, ben on comprend qu'on a été contributif. Fait que c'est comme ça que je me
19 paye [rires], c'est une partie de mon salaire.

Floch does not explicitly criticize the traditional career advancement pattern. He implicitly does so by expressing the difficulty ("c'est pas facile" (line 1)) to deviate from the norm, which suggests the pervasiveness of the traditional narrative. There's also discomfort implied when he says that it takes a certain amount of time before one can say "oui, j'suis confortable avec le choix que je fais, oui j'assume totalement" (lines 12-13). He brings the precision that embracing his

situation is not to merely accept it which can suggest he is tolerating a pain since “c’est pas non plus une souffrance” for him (line 13). He redefines it as finding his way by aspiring to contribute, but he downplays the extent to this impact by saying “on change pas le monde” (line 15) which may suggest a realistic view of his influence. Using the pronoun “we”, he positions himself as a member of the SSE community. Paradoxically, he claims that “on change le monde une coop à la fois” (line 16), but mentions that it is somehow a joke between members of the SSE community, suggesting that it may be overly ambitious (see F26), due to the mentioned pervasiveness of what he claims that society values such as accumulation (see lines 2-6). On the other hand, there is some belief in the truth of the reported claim that each small contribution in a coop can help change the world.

7.6.3. *Relationship and differences*

This extract follows a question I asked about the aspects that kept him grounded within the SSE. His friends are said to have helped in that aspect. Shared values, being insiders are the bonding elements he brings up which contributes to constructing a collective identity:

1 **F24 Floch:** Ouais ben c’était les amis de d’études, les amis de collègue, les amis d’études, là. [...], ça
 2 fait partie des des éléments qui ont aidé à ancrer, c’est que les amis que j’ai aujourd’hui, ben ce sont
 3 beaucoup des gens qui sont dans l’économie sociale, t’sais. Alors, parce que aussi parce qu’on partage
 4 souvent les mêmes valeurs, parce qu’on aime bien discuter de parce que on on est un peu passionné,
 5 parce qu’on a cheminé aussi un peu de la même manière, puis, euhm et puis c’est quand même assez
 6 nouveau au Québec hein, je veux dire Nancy Neamtan quand elle lance le mouvement, on est en 95, 96
 7 là, y’a on parle, on commence à parler d’économie sociale à peu près à ce moment-là, donc euh, c’est
 8 sûr qu’à l’université, on voyait pas ça, on en parlait pas du tout du tout. Je même même des
 9 coopératives qui existaient davantage, on en parlait pas à mon époque, pis on en parle très peu même
 10 encore aujourd’hui. Donc t., donc ça c’est sûr que quand on on se reconnaît entre nous, bah ça crée des
 11 liens. Donc on on a cette facilité-là. Et et bon ben après ça c’est c’est le réseau qui qui, professionnels
 12 autour de de ça qui qui qui qui est composé de différents types d’acteurs, tantôt gouvernementaux,
 13 mais tantôt associatifs et et et voir sur le terrain comme comme entreprise d’économie sociale, donc on
 14 on on on a cette cette une forme de communauté d’esprit qui s’installe, un peu comme dans n’importe
 15 quel secteur d’activité sans doute où on développe son réseau, sa famille [rires] en quelque sorte. [...]

Floch is presented as being part of a community as he explains that most of his friends are in the SSE (lines 2-3). It is a community that often shares the same values, is a bit passionate, and has somehow experienced the same path. But he hedges with words such as “souvent” and “un peu” (lines 3-5) which suggests there are differences in their worldview. Not everyone shares the same level of excitement towards the SSE, and their back story can differ as well. It shows Floch’s awareness of the heterogeneity within the SSE, which offers a more realistic view of that sector.

Using historical context, which presents him as knowledgeable about the SSE, he accentuates his legitimacy as a member within the community (lines 6-7). Then, by saying that coops are not really spoken about back then, and even now, followed by how this obviously creates connections when they recognize each other (lines 8-11), Floch creates this feeling of being an insider of a niche group. Overall, there is a construction of a sense of community (“une forme de communauté d’esprit qui s’installe” (line 14)) through his discourse but he does so with a sense of humbleness as he does not make it something exclusive to the SSE (“un peu comme dans n’importe quel secteur d’activité” (lines 14-15) suggesting they are no more special than other sectors on that aspect.

This next extract solidifies the analysis of the previous extracts as the elements of differentiation – of the SSE in comparison to non-SSE organizations – and their impact on his lifestyle choices are presented. Despite the shortcomings of the SSE, Floch still makes sense of the situation in a nuanced positive way which adds credibility to his claims:

1 **F24 Floch:** [...] Sur la question des difficultés, ben, t’sais la la plus grande difficulté je dirais c’est,
 2 c’est que, il faut, il faut pas, on peut pas voir le développement de carrière en économie sociale de la
 3 même manière que dans l’entreprise privée ou de l’entreprise publique 100% public, comme par
 4 exemple le gouvernement, t’sais. [...] On on est dans des perspectives, d’entreprises qui agissent avec
 5 des missions fortement social, y’a toujours un volet économique bien sûr, mais fortement social, qui
 6 vise des impacts sociaux et qui, [...], mais ce sont des besoins s. pour la grande pa., pour la grande
 7 majorité sociaux, parfois environnementaux, et et ce qui fait que, c’est pas, c’est pas ce qui est ce qu’il
 8 y a de plus lucratif, donc les conditions salariales, les conditions de travail, je te dirai plus les
 9 conditions salariales que les conditions de travail. Conditions salariales sont sont sont moindres un
 10 peu, [...] Donc c’est c’est sûr que tu dois organiser ta vie, en tant que tel. J’ai j’ai pas le même train de
 11 vie que des amis à moi qui sont dans des secteurs privés, VP de leur boîte, et cetera, tu sais. Ce cela
 12 étant dit, euh, d’un autre côté, les conditions de travail, les conditions de travail c’est l’environnement
 13 de travail, c’est l’équipe, c’est c’est tout c’est tout c’est le tout, ben sur ce côté-là, pour moi, la plupart
 14 de mes expériences ont été formidables. J’ai rencontré des fabuleux humains, j’ai travaillé sur des
 15 mandats wow, je des fois j’en reviens pas encore, t’sais les choses qu’on qu’on a réalisé ensemble, pis
 16 t’sais, pour moi ça c’est ça fait partie aussi du tout d’une carrière. [...] Donc ça a ses bien fait, pis ça
 17 c’est moins bon côté aussi, mais de façon générale, parce que tout n’est pas rose et beau et couleur arc-
 18 en-ciel dans la vie quand même là, mais généralement, y’a plus de de de de bons côtés que de moins
 19 bons côtés ouais.

How Floch presents the biggest difficulty of being in the SSE is that one cannot see career development the same way as they would in the private sector or the public sector (lines 1-4). By saying that it is about “seeing” career development, it suggests that it requires a shift in mindset as the perspectives of the SSE is strongly social in nature and sometimes environmental (lines 4-7). The negative consequences he associates with the social end goal of the SSE are mainly in terms of reduced salary since he says that that sector is not the most profitable (lines 7-10). The negative

aspects are then counterbalanced by the positive side he reports getting from his work. He speaks highly of the SSE using expressive emotional adjectives (“formidable”, “fabuleux” (lines 14-15)) to emphasize the benefits that compensate for having a lower pay. Career in the SSE is reconstructed in a holistic way to highlight how much its benefits outweigh its downsides (“y’a plus de [...] bons côtés que de moins bons côtés” (lines 18-19). He balances his view with realism by using the expression that “tout n’est pas rose et beau et couleur arc-en-ciel dans la vie quand même” (lines 17-18). This statement serves to counterbalance overoptimism preventing his narrative to appear over-idealized or naïve, making him more credible.

7.6.4. *Life perspectives*

Pursuing the conversation, Floch articulates a nuanced approach to consumption and demonstrating the feasibility of meeting his responsibilities despite having to adapt his lifestyle due to his career path in the SSE:

- 1 **F28 Floch:** [...] forcément on, on adapte sa sa sa sa vie, à, ben dans le fond c’est quoi adapter sa vie
- 2 c’est qu’on accepte peut-être de consommer un petit peu moins de ci de cela mais t’sais on se prive pas
- 3 non plus là, j’veux dire moi j’ai # enfants [...], j’ai quand même des obligations comme comme
- 4 parents, je je j’dois faire face à des enjeux aussi par rapport à à leurs besoins à eux. Donc je je je prends
- 5 mes responsabilités puis, je je contribue ce qu’y faut contribuer même si j’ai j’ai moins moins à
- 6 contribuer que d’autres mais, mais ça fait aussi partie des choix c’est à dire je je ne travaille pas, je ne
- 7 travaille pas 60 h semaine, hein. [Inaudible] je je je, j’va travailler, ouais j’veux travailler 35, 40 h des
- 8 semaines, j’veux faire peut-être 45 h parce que j’ai des mandats qui qui arrivent à échéance puis j’veux
- 9 mettre un petit peu plus, oui ça m’arrive même des fois faire un peu plus mais, je y’a quand même
- 10 aussi une forme de d’aménagement de vie qui qui vient avec le choix de de carrière ouais.

Floch normalizes the idea of adapting (by consuming less) which can be seen as restricting ourselves, but he frames it positively as he specifies that “on se prive pas non plus” (lines 2-3). This can be interpreted as Floch being able to indulge in things he enjoys although working in the SSE led him to adapt his life by consuming less. Floch underscores this point by referencing his responsibilities as a parent by hedging with “j’veux dire moi j’ai # enfant” (line 3) illustrating that he can meet his children’s needs even if he claims that he had to adapt (lines 3-5) by having a lower salary. This hedging also suggests a form of antagonistic relationship between parenthood and self-indulgence. Agency is demonstrated as he describes himself as being able to adapt himself, and fulfill his responsibilities as a parent, and to contribute what he is capable of. This downside of having less to contribute than others (lines 5-6) is quickly downplayed by presenting

the benefits of not having to work 60 hours (lines 6-7), which can be associated to more lucrative career path.

Then, I commented on the difficulty of temptation of wanting more and praised Floch for resisting to which he responds by sharing his perspective and experience:

- 1 **F29 Kenny:** Ouais j'trouve ça quand même noble aussi parce que t'sais dans dans la société, c'est
2 facile de désirer plus, c'est
3 **F30 Floch:** Ben on est on est tellement sollicité ouais absolument.
4 **F31 Kenny:** c'est un peu la société de consommation, c'est ça. [...], mais ce que je trouve plus difficile
5 c'est de résister à cette tentation pis vous vous semblez bien résister ça [...]
6 **F32 Floch:** [Rires] Ben écoute, ça fait partie de ma personnalité je pense au départ mais ça ça prend un
7 certain temps avant de le réaliser. c'est d'apprendre à se connaître beaucoup. De de avec le temps on
8 développe avec l'expérience, la maturité aussi, alors on, [...] moi la la seule chose qui me, t'sais j'ai
9 pas, comment j'te dirais y'a 2 choses qui me que j'aime bien dans la vie je j'aime le j'aime le X puis
10 j'aime les Y t'sais fait que j'ferais jamais de compromis là-dessus t'sais pis les livres. J'ferai jamais de
11 compromis là-dessus [rires] t'sais mais bon, j'ai pas besoin d'aller au resto euh 3 fois par mois, j'ai pas
12 besoin, t'sais j'ai pas de de j'ai pas j'ai pas besoin de partir en voyage à tous les années non plus à
13 l'extérieur du pays. J'ai voyagé beaucoup, je l'ai vu le monde j'en ai vu une bonne partie j'ai pas vu
14 tout, j'ai encore plein de pays que j'aimerais voir. Bon ben on fait des listes, pis on se dit « ben, quand
15 j'aurai plus de moyens quand j'aurai accumulé assez d'argent ben j'pourrais peut-être m'offrir ce
16 voyage » t'sais. Donc c'est plus des c'est plus de cette façon-là j'vais pas dans le Sud à tous les hivers,
17 pas que j'aimerais pas ça là c'est juste mais mais en même temps c'est même pas, c'est pas ça c'est ça
18 ça me vient ça ne vient pas me rejoindre moi sur le plan des valeurs non plus. Puis, j's'très sensible
19 aussi à l'environnement, fait que j'ai comme pas envie de, de ce t'sais c'est c'est c'est c'est un peu,
20 c'est un peu une fois que tu sais, une fois que t'es conscient ben, c'est difficile d'aller contre ta
21 conscience. T'sais.

Floch downplays the compliment since he says that it was part of his personality since the beginning (lines 6-7) which may have made it easier for him to resist the temptations. He also downplays the compliment by pointing out that he himself has temptations that he cannot compromise on, which is a sport, a collectible item, and books (lines 8-10). This avoids the possibility of seeming hypocritical after partly accepting the compliment and presenting himself as being “très sensible aussi à l'environnement” (lines 18-19). In contrary, it does not seem like he has to resist much as of now since he expresses that [il n'a] pas besoin d'aller au resto [...] 3 fois par mois, [...] j'ai pas besoin de partir en voyage à tous les années non plus à l'extérieur du pays”, etc. (lines 11-13). There is no need for him to do all those things which suggests that he is satisfied without doing many activities. Specifically, when it comes to travelling, he says that it does not fit within his values (of caring for the environment), thus he refrains himself from travelling to the South every winter even if he would not hate it (lines 16-18). Overall, it portrays Floch as easily pleased and principled.

Awareness is also presented as having a role in guiding his personal behaviour and lifestyle choices. In the beginning of the extract, he mentions that “ça prend un certain temps avant de le réaliser” (lines 6-7), which suggests that for a period, he was not aware, for example, about the consumerist society I mentioned (line 4). Then, at the end of the extract, he mentions that “c’est un peu une fois que tu sais, une fois que t’es conscient ben, c’est difficile d’aller contre ta conscience” (lines 20-21). This suggests that awareness is not only about knowing, but it is a transformative process for him, which guides him in his moral landscape. He then dives deeper into the moral theme in the following extract:

1 **F34 Floch:** Fait que qu’est-ce qui qu’est-ce qui te rend plus heureux t’sais c’est d’être en accord avec
 2 ta conscience ou ou de t’en foutre un peu pis d’accumuler ces ces ces ces irritants de conscience pis
 3 qu’à un moment donné tu dis « ouin mais quel genre de personne je suis aujourd’hui, qu’est-ce que je
 4 suis devenu? Est-ce que j’aurais pu être plus contributif, est-ce que j’aurais pu avoir un une autre fa
 5 façon d’être dans la vie qui soit plus plus en accord avec le monde fini dans lequel on vit par exemple,
 6 et cetera » t’sais. Et ça ben ça fait aussi partie de la réflexion euh dans les valeurs puis, c’est très collé à
 7 la réalité de l’économie sociale aussi parce qu’on est on est dans on baigne dans cet esprit que que nos
 8 actions doivent ont un impact et et cet impact là ben il peut être positif ou négatif puis on espère
 9 d’emblée qu’y soit positif puis... Alors ça fait aussi partie de ça dans j’irais t’sais j’pourrais pas
 10 j’pourrais pas aller travailler pour une minière au service marketing d’une minière t’sais j’serai j’serai
 11 pas heureux. Ni d’une pétrolière, tu sais. J’aurai les compétences pour le faire puis les doigts dans le
 12 nez puis je pourrais, t’sais, mettre ma switch à off au niveau des valeurs pis d’dire regarde là j’pile le
 13 plus longtemps que je peux pis après ça je verrai, mais non c’est on a une vie à vivre, on a, alors on.
 14 Ben ça c’est c’est d’autres d’autres expériences hein, c’est c’est [rires] Mais c’est ça c’est pas un saut
 15 en bung- oui c’est un saut en bungee mais t’es bien attaché, donc ça va t’sais [rires] C’est pas un saut
 16 sans parachute non plus c’est c’est assez, t’sais, y’a quand même, puis on est on est chanceux au
 17 Québec, au Canada, on a quand même, une économie qui est bah qui est qui a quand même qui offre
 18 quand même un filet social, t’sais donc ce ce ce genre d’engagement-là est encore possible aujourd’hui
 19 c’qui c’qu’il est peut-être moins aux États-Unis par exemple.

Using rhetorical questions, Floch morally frames the discourse of happiness by presenting the consequences on happiness based on the actions you take according to your conscience (moral principles) (lines 1-2). His moral principles are constructed as part of his identity since he follows up with the question “mais quel genre de personne je suis aujourd’hui, qu’est-ce que je suis devenu?” (lines 3-4). And finally, he ends up on the question of “est-ce que j’aurais pu être plus contributif” (line 4), which in this sequence, lets us suppose that his conscience is understood as having a positive impact since he mentions that “ça fait aussi partie de la réflexion [...] dans les valeurs” (line 6). This framing brings a strong value judgment since not aligning your conscience to your action is to “t’en foutre un peu” (line 2). This discourse about morality and values is summarized as being close to the reality of the SSE.

Shortly after, by saying that he would not be happy and be able to work for a mining or oil company (lines 9-11), he further commits to his principles, by providing a specific counterexample of professional works he would not engage in. He brings up his personal competency (“J’aurai les compétences pour le faire puis les doigts dans le nez” (lines 11-12), which presents this choice as resulting from his own will rather than due to incompetency. He claims that he could also turn off his moral compass and persevere as long as possible, but his own mortality (“on a une vie à vivre” (line 13)) is provided as a reason to dissuade him from taking that route as it suggests that it would be a waste of time.

It is to note that Floch does not suggest full agency to take ethically motivated actions as he presents an external factor that may have helped him. Floch highlights the chance we have for living in Quebec, Canada, since he says that we have a social net that allows the possibility to be socially involved (lines 16-18). It suggests that his agency to act morally can be exerted thanks to the society in which he lives in. The metaphor of having a string to keep you secure while bungee jumping is used to illustrate this contribution of external factor on his agency. A comparison with the United States is then used to demonstrate how it may be less likely to socially engage in a different country with a presumably worst social net (lines 18-19).

The influence the culture has on our behaviour has also been brought up after I commented about the difficulty of acting against the current:

- 1 **F37 Kenny:** Ouais [...] pis des fois c’est difficile de pas aller contre le courant [inaudible]
- 2 **F38 Floch:** Très difficile oui oui oui, c’est c’est, c’est ce que c’est probablement ce qui a de plus
- 3 difficile. Ben parce que on est encore aujourd’hui là, jusqu’à preuve du contraire, dans une société de
- 4 consommation où on nous incite à ces à à l’accumulation, et donc dans cette société-là qui... ben t’sais,
- 5 là ça devient de plus en plus difficile et de plus en plus dur à défendre là c’est c’est ce qui est
- 6 intéressant c’est qu’on va le voir de plus en plus, et et là y’a des gens qui vont, peut-être re- prendre en
- 7 note davantage les valeurs qui les animent parce que dans le fond on a quand même fondamentalement
- 8 on l- l’être humain a des bonnes valeurs là, dans nos sociétés j’veux dire, t’sais c’est sûr qu’y’en a des
- 9 assassins y’a des voleurs et tout ça, mais c’est pas la majorité de nos sociétés là quand même.

On that topic, Floch attributes a certain amount of power that society has over our own agency by mentioning that society “nous incite à [...] l’accumulation” (line 4). By externalizing the source of influence on consumerist behaviour, it paradoxically allows the agency of the population to change themselves. He does so by adopting a positive view on human nature, saying that “on a quand même fondamentalement, [...] l’être humain a des bonne valeurs” (lines 7-8), which means

that within the individual it is possible for them to “peut-être [...] prendre en note davantage les valeurs qui les animent” (lines 6-7) and this knowledge may lead to a change. He does not present his belief as the truth either since markers of uncertainty was introduced such as “peut-être”, “quand même” and he presents a nuanced perspective by saying that there are murderers and scammers, although they do not represent the majority in our society (lines 8-9). This counterexample further positions Floch as realistic in his vision.

Near the end of the interview, Floch asks about the future narrative we can have to envision a better world, which engages me as the interviewer about thinking on the long-term impact and direction of our society:

1 **F58 Floch:** [...] moi je je regarde beaucoup ce qui se fait en France y’a des des des auteurs assez
2 intéressants puis euh ils sont un peu plus avancés dans la réflexion en France, et ils amènent toute la la
3 question une fois qu’on a dit ça, c’est quoi notre récit de pour demain? Quel va être le récit, hein, la
4 vision? Partager qu’on va avoir ben c’e- c’e- c’est là où je pense que l’économie sociale a aussi son
5 rôle de contribuer à cette vision de demain. Et dans ce sens-là, c’est moi c’est ce qui me, ce qui me
6 maintient davantage dans la, dans ce que je fais c’est que, c’est là où j’ai l’impression que j’vais
7 pouvoir, en tout cas, un (énumération) continuer de m’émanciper, deux (énumération) continuer à à
8 vivre en cohérence avec mes valeurs, et 3 (énumération), avoir le le sentiment de contribuer aussi à la
9 société dans laquelle je vis, t’sais. [...]

This interaction positions Floch as a visionary and a dreamer since he believes that the SSE has a role to play in this future vision (lines 3-5). This long-termism vision is said to be a factor in pushing him towards doing what he considers morally good (4-6). In a sense, this external focus on positive contribution (towards society) becomes internalized through personal growth, feeling of agency (“j’vais pouvoir” (line 6)) and feeling of wanting to contribute.

7.6.5. Summary

Floch’s narrative offers an interesting case study for a career transition towards the SSE that was not described as being drastic in terms of changes from his previous career. His work experiences were always within the cultural and tourism industries which he claims to be closely related to the SSE.

His reflection on his initial education, where he presents the choices to either pursue a bachelor in tourism or a master’s in global trade, portrays his career path development in a somewhat passive voice. Expressing that these choices presented themselves diminishes his agency during

that period and that in turn can be used as a defence for a decision that did not appear to align with his prior work experience in the tourism sector.

During that specific work experience, Floch presents himself as not being fully aware of the coop landscape, but that experience taught him something new which “unlocked” a part of his mind. It suggests that maybe something related to the model of the coop or to the values it espouses was already in line with a belief deep down in him but was not clear to him.

Going back to the narration of his studies, he did embrace his choice in studying global trade despite this first “décllic”. During that period, he demonstrates more agency after the choice was made as he expresses that he focused his master’s concentration on marketing and actively looked for opportunities that aligned with his interests in culture and tourism.

After graduating, Floch presents elements of his experiences as always being close to the SSE using, for example, language of proximity and engagement. It contributes to construct Floch’s identity as genuinely invested towards the SSE, but even there, him ending up working in the SSE uses the element of chance events. Floch uses vague temporal markers to represent the transition towards to SSE since the gap between his education and work experience were always somehow related to the SSE. It suggests that there was not a strong triggering moment that required a discourse of deep introspection. Regardless of the intensity used to describe this transition, Floch positions himself throughout as having cultural sensitivity and adaptive.

Regarding the source of influence on his belief system, Floch often uses uncertainty markers. He avoids making prescriptive statements and those uncertainty markers can further emphasize the idea that his upbringing did not have much to be scrutinized about and that his belief system did not undergo strong moments of emotional disconnect. For example, when he reports his upbringing within his family, he constructs an identity of an open-minded person having a humanistic value system.

Since Floch explains that it is important that our work should align with our personal values, work can then be seen a reflection of his identity. In his situation, working in the SSE, he positions himself as altruistic, concerned about contributing positively to society. On top of it, he does so with an amount of self-awareness as he introduces his perception in the statements of contribution

such as “avoir l’impression de contribuer” and “je sens que je contribue”. It reduces the impression of self-importance, and it strays away from the hero narrative.

To solidify his positioning as a member of the SSE, Floch provides an example of an alternative career path (e.g., work for a mining company) he could have taken but chose to not go down that path. This choice is not presented as a failure of competency (lack of skills), but a willful choice to act accordingly to his principles. The emotional negativity that this job in the mining company would have presumably generated was provided as a deterrent from choosing that path. These counterexamples help legitimizing his identity as a member of the SSE and presents him as actively pursuing authenticity through his actions instead of looking for economic gain at the expense of his values. Furthermore, he expresses self-restraint from travelling as he says that he is caring for the environment which solidifies his position as having conviction. On the other hand, he exposes areas in which he may not perfectly fit with his criticism of the consumerist society such as not compromising on a sport, a collectible item, and books, which could be a statement that prevents him from appearing hypocritical in the face of contradicting behaviour.

Comparison is also done with his peers who have more lucrative jobs. Contrary to presenting an alternative career path he would refuse to do, when speaking of his peers, he seems to avoid direct criticism by hesitating to negatively formulate their lifestyle, suggesting they do something more in an undesirable direction. To reason with the different lifestyles, Floch justifies his choice by providing the positive emotional outcomes of choosing to contribute through his work. The sacrifice of salary is also presented under a positive light as it is the price to pay to have a meaningful job that provides as much or more satisfaction than his friend, for instance.

As much as he often speaks of the positive impact of his career in the SSE, he downplays the extent of the impact which suggests that he remains realistic in what he believes he can accomplish within his work. Nonetheless, he paradoxically demonstrates a certain realistic hopefulness as he says that his community of the SSE somehow jokingly claims to change the world one coop at a time. His realism is also apparent when he talks about the SSE in general. The sector has its downside, it is not all rainbows and glitter, but the perks are said to be worth it for him. This sense of community and feeling of belonging are used to reinforce his position as being committed to the SSE.

Regarding his role as a parent, this identity was not used as a justification for making sacrifices. It is rather used to illustrate his capacity to adapt even if those responsibilities are presented as bringing a certain number of problems. He claims that he has less to contribute, but he contributes wherever possible which suggests agency as he claims to adapt his life according to other life roles priorities, but that it is part of his choice. Specifically, he expresses that “ça fait aussi partie des choix” (qu’il fait). To have full agency to act morally, Floch presents an external factor as a contributor which is to have a social net. Agency is then a complex interplay between external factors, identities that may favour certain behaviours.

Finally, Floch’s discourse also positions him as a visionary and a dreamer. He asks questions that engage the interviewer (me) to envision a positive future and this long-termism fuels Floch’s discourse, but he does so while presenting a realistic perspective by avoiding definitive truth statements. There is mainly a focus on external outcomes such as the betterment of society, but he demonstrates self-awareness by expressing that this desire is also internal to him due to the mentions of personal growth, and feeling of wants.

7.6.6. Table summary of subject positions

Subject positions	Examples	Interpretations (à voir si nécessaire)
Evolved	<p>F2 : [...] j'ai travaillé pour une compagnie de de théâtre québécoise qui fait de la tournée internationale [...], c'était pas nécessairement une entreprise privée au sens inc de la chose mais c'était une entreprise culturelle. [...] J'ai fait ça quand même un p'tit bout de temps pis après ça <u>j'ai évolué</u>. J'suis parti à l'étranger vivre deux ans en coopération internationale en Pays A et en Pays B. [...]</p> <p>10</p> <p>F4 : [...] pis j'ai travaillé b- avec des communautés autochtones de là-bas, dans le domaine de l'art toujours dans la culture [...]</p>	Distances himself from his past self and presents himself as more mature now. Based on the context in his career trajectory of getting closer to the SSE where it is presented positively, this evolution suggests that taking a step away from the incorporated aspect of his previous work in the private enterprise is a good career move.
Close and invested to the SSE	<p>F4: [...] Et tu vois tout de suite la nature là j'suis j'suis jamais très loin de l'économie sociale, la plupart des clients c'est souvent des des entreprises à buts non lucratifs ou des petites entreprises du milieu culturel ou du milieu touristique. [...] Puis là on a proposé la coopérative pis là j'me suis vraiment investi dans la la structure du modèle [...]</p>	His choices in work were always closely related to the SSE and when he had to work on a coop, he mentioned that he really invested himself in that organizational structure. This positions him as genuinely interested in the SSE.
Opportunity seeker	<p>F4: [...] j'ai, j'ai fait le switch un moment donné où j'ai eu l'opportunité parce que je déménageais à ce moment-là [...] l'opportunité était de me retrouver un emploi sur Ville C et cette recherche-là m'a dit m'a m'a amené à aller vers le milieu de l'économie sociale.</p>	He actively sought opportunities (active voice), but those opportunities are in turn leading him towards the SSE (passive voice). It presents Floch as having mitigated agency.
Open-minded and considerate about other humans holistically	<p>F12: [...] y'a peut-être le cliché de d'un travail qui est, disons, le travail avec des humains qui tient en compte qui tient en compte pis qui prend en considération l'humain dans son ensemble pas juste comme comme un consommateur, mais comme partie prenante qui qui qui qui a aussi une vie, une culture, donc pour moi ça a toujours ça m'a toujours habité je pense. C'est peut-être mon éducation familiale je je j'en sais rien peut-être sans doute. Euhm une forme d'ouverture sur le monde, qui qui, qui, qui a toujours qui, qui a toujours été présente là dans dans, dans mon environnement, familial d'abord [...]</p>	Using the adverb "toujours", he is presented as having deeply rooted values of being open-minded and humane. It is supported by him mentioning that he takes in consideration the human as more than just a consumer. He still introduces marker or uncertainty which suggests that familial education may have influenced him, but it was not obvious.
Desiring to do something that resonates with his	<p>F12: [...] J'aurais très bien pu aller travailler pour une entreprise multinationale dans le département marketing et cetera euh j'aurais pro- j'aurais gagné probablement mieux ma</p>	Using a counterexample of a career path he would not take, even if it offered a better salary, he projects that he would eventually evolve towards something

values and cannot do otherwise	<p>vie et mais probablement qu'après un certain temps, je me serais senti fatigué et je j'aurais eu j'aurais voulu ch. évoluer vers quelque chose qui est en qui résonne mieux au sens de mes valeurs t'sais</p> <p>F34 : [...] j'pourrais pas j'pourrais pas aller travailler pour une minière au service marketing d'une minière t'sais j'serai j'serai pas heureux . Ni d'une pétrolière, tu sais. J'aurai les compétences pour le faire puis les doigts dans le nez puis je pourrais, t'sais, mettre ma switch à off au niveau des valeurs pis d'dire regarde là j'pile le plus longtemps que je peux pis après ça je verrai, mais non c'est on a une vie à vivre,</p>	that aligns better with his values. It presents Floch as having principles and as someone who follows his convictions.
Belonging of the SSE	<p>F16: [...] à partir du moment où on a fait un peu le le le le ménage de tout ça dans sa tête et dans sa vie aussi, ben on on arrive, je pense, à avoir une forme de, de de paix mentale ou de quiétude qui dit « Ben oui, j'suis j'suis vraiment dans mon environnement de travail, je suis vraiment dans mon élément là où je suis, le ou je sens que je contribue le plus »</p> <p>F24: [...], parce que aussi parce qu'on partage souvent les mêmes valeurs, parce qu'on aime bien discuter de parce que on on est un peu passionné, parce qu'on a cheminé aussi un peu de la même manière,</p>	Through the discourse of emotional peace, Floch establishes himself as belonging in the right work environment. It suggests that when seeing clear, he belongs to the SSE and is committed to his work.
Optimist	<p>F20: [...] tu sais, puis après ça ben, tu sais, on change pas le monde, mais nous ce qu'on ce qu'on dit tout le temps un peu à la blague entre nous, mais oui, on change le monde une coop à la fois,</p> <p>F24: [...] tout n'est pas rose et beau et couleur arc-en-ciel dans la vie quand même là, mais généralement, y'a plus de de de bons côtés que de moins bons côtés ouais.</p>	A negative outlook is often preceded by a positive outlook in Floch's discourse. Most of the time, he ends on a positive note, but he conveys a sense of realism in his perspective as he does not make claims that are overly positive. Nonetheless, there is still hope placed on coops to change the world.
Value driven and careful of the environment	<p>F32: [...] Donc c'est plus des c'est plus de cette façon-là j'vais pas dans le Sud à tout les hivers, pas que j'aimerais pas ça là c'est juste mais mais en même temps c'est même pas, c'est pas ça c'est ça ça me vient ça ne vient pas me rejoindre moi sur le plan des valeurs non plus. Puis, j's' très sensible aussi à l'environnement, fait que j'ai comme pas envie de, de ce t'sais c'est c'est c'est c'est un peu, c'est un peu une fois que tu sais, une fois que t'es conscient ben, c'est difficile d'aller contre ta conscience.</p>	When a behaviour does not align with his values, he states that he strays away from those actions. Presenting himself as sensible towards the environment, thus discouraging him from travelling every winter. It presents him as value driven, following his principles.

<p>Competent and value driven</p>	<p>F34: [...] j'pourrais pas j'pourrais pas aller travailler pour une minière au service marketing d'une minière t'sais j'serai j'serai pas heureux. Ni d'une pétrolière, tu sais. J'aurai les compétences pour le faire puis les doigts dans le nez</p>	<p>Reinforces his identity as value driven, but this time, it is done so by proving his competency. He does not do something because he is incapable, but he really makes the choice to not do it. It shows moral agency and suggests that the choice of being in the SSE is not due to a failure of competency.</p>
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8. Subject positions mobilisation in the account of career transition towards the transition

In this chapter, based on the discursive analysis of the interviews, there were recurring patterns of subject positions that I have highlighted and have considered particularly relevant. These positionings allows for a greater understanding of which identities were presented, how they were used by individuals to make sense of their career transition towards the SSE, and what they accomplished within the context. Afterward, I will propose one way to group these positionings based the main challenges these positionings aim to resolve.

8.1. Detailed summary of the subject positioning moves

8.1.1. In continuity with the past

Interviewees can position themselves as being in continuity with their past selves. They would do so by bringing forward elements that are similar between their previous work experiences and their current (or projected) engagements in the SSE. For example, Erwin would mention that in his previous work within an entrepreneurial environment, he always enjoyed counseling, serving his client and helping them, which are resembling to his visions about the SSE. Reframing their previous work in terms of SSE values is also discursively performed. For example, Conny symbolically denies doing consulting at one instance and rather frames his role as helping people. They are, in some sense, establishing a parallel between environments that could be considered incompatible on a fundamental value. This reframing shows that they still have the desire of helping, regardless of whether it was in the past or in the present.

Another way they establish elements of continuity is by speaking about their personality traits, their interests, and/or their skills and mentioning how they were always like that, always interested in something, and/or how they want to make better use of their skill that was valuable in the past. Gunther, for instance, would claim to have always had critical thinking, which fuels his skepticism

towards the dominant economic system and the profit motive, thus siding him more with the values of the SSE. When telling about his career path, Floch would mention that his work experiences within the tourism and cultural industry implied that he was never really far from the SSE. As for Dina, she would mention that in her past work as a financial communicator, she had the skills to tell stories, to be convincing, but ties it to the values of integrity; she would be unhappy to tell stories that she does not believe in. Now that she does not believe in the stories of neoliberalism anymore, she expresses more enthusiasm regarding the idea of social innovation where she believes that it has greater social utility. Her intelligence (personality traits and skill), her interests in the topic of economy would be relevant for her transition.

The positioning allows the interviewees to achieve a form of legitimacy and coherence in their rationale for changing careers. This leaves the receiver of their discourse with a straightforward understanding of their identity as not entirely out of line with how they currently present themselves. It also provides the interviewees with a consistency in their sense of self and a significance of their past experiences. Their discourse suggests that their transition is authentic as they showcase continuity in their beliefs, and they link their skills that were relevant in the past to their desire of contributing to society.

8.1.2. Different from who they were and what they used to believe

Interviewees partly position themselves as being different from who they were and from what they used to believe. Contrary to Erwin, Conny, Gunther, and Floch, as they did not present a particularly intense change in identity and career transition, Dina and Isabel expressed greater detachment from their previously held beliefs and identities. For example, Dina would describe herself as no longer holding the neoliberal beliefs. They would do so by critically examining their past experiences and by questioning their previous ideology and goals. Isabel explicitly mentioned that her previous work encourages consumerism which negatively impacts society. Then, when she spoke about trying to quit her career in marketing, she kept getting offers based on what she was known for (e.g., promoting consumption) and it suggests that her identity at that point did not appear to belong to her; it was a fabrication that is now held by the professional network and she has distanced herself from that image. Most of the interviewees would use passive voice to speak about some of their past which suggests detachment from their past.

This positioning serves to demonstrate the capacity and the desire of these interviewees to change their identity. It would allow them to construct new identities better aligned with a career within the SSE as it would pose less contradictions with certain aspects of their past such as their beliefs. It creates a distance between their current selves and past selves as they do no longer share the same beliefs which allows them to detach their past without creating an identity vacuum. Overall, distinguishing from their past selves serves as a narrative redemption arc since they are exposing what they consider as undesirable part of their past. They do not condone what they believed or what they did.

8.1.3. Having changed career due to chance events

Interviewees positions themselves as having changed their career due to chance events. Part of their discourse introduced unexpected work experience as having contributed to leading their career path towards the SSE. These chance events would in turn be presented as a pivotal moment as it sparked their interests and made them aware about the SSE. For example, Gunther's initial goal was to avoid his military service and he ended up working on a societal project. Floch was looking for an opportunity since he was moving to another city, and the opportunity was said to have brought him closer to the SSE. As for Erwin, he got in touch with the SSE while working at his "traditional" enterprise. Being involved with the SSE was presented more as an after effect from the luck of discovering the SSE.

Personal unexpected events high in emotional language such as going through a burnout-like state (Dina) or going through suffering after realizing they have been in cognitive dissonance (Isabel) were also associated to their desire to change to something better-fitting with their values. Events that were out of their control (e.g., the COVID pandemic (Conny)) was said to have played a role as well in the transition. Being involved with the SSE for Dina, Isabel, and Conny was rather a result of their active quest for finding their next career step due to unforeseen circumstances.

In both cases, unexpected work experiences, and undesired personal or contextual events were presented as having affected their career trajectory. These factors suggest that they had limited agency over their career path in the past and demonstrate the importance of the influence of external circumstances. It may require some open-mindedness or a certain state of mind to allow external circumstances to have an influence. For a moment of revelation to lead to a desire of

change, it portrays the SSE as an underrepresented career option; it is not a solution that comes to mind quickly when someone questions their own past work experiences. Nonetheless, the fact that most interviewees did not speak about elements of resistance when discovering the SSE suggests that it was a natural progression that was not imposed on them. It became a willful choice which enhances their authenticity and dedication.

8.1.4. Not selfish, ethical

Interviewees are positioned as not acting on selfish impulses and rather guided by ethical principles. They achieve this positioning by giving examples of unethical, self-serving behaviours or practices and mention that they do not agree with these practices. This is the case of Conny who exposed unethical consulting practices such as staying as long as possible within a company by creating unnecessary work. This positioning is also possible by alluding to the idea that the SSE serves a greater purpose. Erwin would mention that the SSE is not only about giving a job to employees, meeting one's own needs, being in a field of interest and to gain mastery, it is more than that. Then, as mentioned previously, they would recognize the limited extent of their social contribution through their work (e.g., Isabel and promotion of overconsumption). Naming the issue with their work can suggest ethical integrity since it requires to consider the moral implication of one's own means of subsistence.

These discursive actions demonstrate awareness of what they consider as unethical. It constructs an archetype of an identity that serves as a deterrent to their projected identity, in other words, it provides with a mental representation of a counterexample of a person they do not want to be. Then, it provides them with a justification for changing careers since their work would, for example, no longer align with their values. The element of comparison with their antithesis also serves as a critique to the "traditional" for-profit sector.

8.1.5. A modest savior

Some interviewees may be positioned as a saviour as they mention that they will help others in difficulty and in need through their work. This is the case for Conny, where he has a target audience for his services, and they are present as being left out from receiving support for their mission. The interviewees may also arrive to this positioning by putting emphasis on the importance of helping

those in need. Referring to the importance of consider the social and environmental impact of their action reinforce this narrative.

This results in positioning those who are at the receiving end of the work of the interviewees as victims. It provides a justification of the importance of their role within the SSE. At the same time, many interviewees would relativize their social contribution in the grand scheme of things such as Conny saying that he is contributing on his symbolic scale, and Floch saying jokingly that they are changing the world, one cooperative at a time. This serves to set their own expectations about one's limited capacity to change the world. It also reduces the self-aggrandizing connotation that can come with adopting a saviour narrative.

8.1.6. Aligned with their values

Interviewees often claim to be aligned with their values after transitioning to the SSE. This positioning is achieved by them validating their transition through the use of emotional concepts. For example, with Erwin saying that he feels in peace with himself, in emotional stability. It is also validated by the external contribution they claim to bring, such as Isabel when she mentions that she managed well the uncertainty by going into the SSE and bringing positive changes. Being better aligned with their values entails some explanation about what was misaligned and questioning traditional metrics of success such as attaining higher salary, going up the hierarchy, getting a house can reinforce this alignment. The interviewees would claim to derive greater satisfaction from humanistic value-based outcomes. Erwin, for example, presents that being happy and making a positive impact through your work is criteria to base himself on to know if someone was well in their career.

These discursive actions achieve authenticity as emotions were used as a form of confirmation of being aligned with their values. For the interviewees, it is suggested that if the emotions are positive, it means that something is going well, it becomes an authentic expression of their "inner" world. This in turn validates their transition, while challenging conventional success metrics as a source of fulfilment. It suggests that bringing positive impact to society may provide better outcomes to the mental state.

8.1.7. Evolved

Interviewees position themselves as a better person that they were as they present themselves as having evolved. Specifically, Dina, Isabel, Floch evoked the concept of evolution in their discourse, saying that they evolved. Dina said it and laughed afterward which mocks her previous self for having held those previous beliefs she evolved from. In all those cases, the notion of evolution suggests that they distanced themselves from their previous identity.

Evolution implies a creation of a point of self-comparison; who was I before I evolved, what have I evolved into? As it has a positive connotation, it suggests that they are embracing their new, more socially, and ethical identity as they are transitioning towards the SSE, the topic of the whole conversation. It also demonstrates their self-awareness of knowing who they were and having a critical judgment of their past self.

8.1.8. More aware

As mentioned previously in other subject positions, interviewees demonstrate themselves as more aware. But in this positioning specifically, it is about explicitly claiming about being more aware in terms of their knowledge about the world and themselves. They would claim, for instance, that they have realized the extent to which they have an influence on other people through their work, are more conscious about the quest for performance normalized by society (Isabel), have discovered a totally different dimension of poverty (Gunther), have understood that they did not work in an environment that matched with their values (Dina). There is a shift from unawareness to greater awareness.

Positioning as being more aware achieves authenticity and commitment. Ignorance can be used as an excuse to not act in the best way possible as one did not know better and could not have done better; in this case, it relates to choosing the most morally sound career option based on their values. Then, to be more aware, the opposite of being ignorant, neutralizes the excuse of ignorance as a justification for not acting morally. This in turns serves to achieve commitment if one does not want to appear hypocritical and wants to position as being honest. It then demonstrates the capacity of introspection and learning. This sentiment is notable when Gunther expresses that once he became more aware, it is difficult to act against your conscience.

8.1.9. Driven by moral desire rather than only driven by interests

Interviewees are now positioned as not being driven only by interests (being interested in), but also driven by moral desire. It adds a dimension to their sources of motivation. When accounting their early career, interviewees would describe their choices as a result of following their personal interests towards a certain industry, or by something they were simply interested in. For example, Erwin, would mention that he chose a particular school because he wanted to do a certain sport. Dina would mention that she got into business school because she was interested in economy, which led to following the elitist French education system since she was good with that subject. Later, as they speak about their desire and motivation of going into the SSE, they put more emphasis on the aspect of social utility. Personal interest was not discarded from the conversation, but an additional element of motivation was introduced.

Through this positioning, they have demonstrated expanded agency; it shifts their agency as the ability to make choices based on interests towards their agency as the ability to make decisions driven by their moral desires. In short, they appear to have greater moral agency. Many discourses of the interviewees suggest a nuanced perspective on agency as they spoke about the potential influence of their upbringing (e.g.: Erwin) and their education (e.g.: Dina, Isabel) on their value system. They have recognized to a certain degree their lack of agency due to their circumstances.

8.1.10. Not being in SSE due to a lack of skill / Having moral conviction

Interviewees position themselves as having chosen the path towards the SSE not because they lacked the skill to be in another sector (e.g., for-profit sector), but because they willingly chose that path due to their moral conviction. They support their positioning by saying that they were successful in their previous job (e.g., Isabel, Dina). Using active voice, they suggest that it was a proactive choice; the SSE was not imposed and neither as a fallback solution. Another example is Floch saying that he would have the skills to work in the oil industry, but he would not be able to do so because of his values. Using external perspectives such as naming the praise they would receive from others about their performance (Dina) and naming a prize that they won for their work (Isabel) reinforces their positioning as being skillful.

Presenting as not lacking skill in their career narration may counter the perception of the SSE as a career downgrade that requires fewer skills or that it is a backup plan. It affirms their competency, which provides legitimacy/credibility to their transition. Then, refusing to do

something despite their capacity illustrates their commitment to the SSE which demonstrates integrity in their actions.

8.1.11. No longer dictated by the search of financial security

Interviewees may position themselves as no longer being dictated by the need of financial security. By mentioning that getting a lower salary is the price to pay when they transitioned towards the SSE, it shows that they were able to let go that incentive. They also justify that sacrifice in salary by proposing that they are gaining by increasing their satisfaction in terms of their personal well-being and their moral conviction. Isabel, Gunther, Floch, and Conny all expressed their concerns about the financial implication of the SSE, and some would invoke the role and responsibilities of their identity as a parent as requiring some financial security which would inhibit their moral agency.

Not surprisingly, the discursive action of this positioning demonstrates moral agency of the speaker. It also demonstrates acceptance of their financial situation as losing a salary is reframed as gaining in moral values. This may suggest a certain correlation between the type of work that contributes positively to society and the salary that comes from that type of work.

8.1.12. Not judging individuals in the “traditional” career path (dilemma present)

When speaking about others' career path, interviewees may attempt to position themselves as not judgmental about other individuals' that pursue a career path within the “traditional” for-profit sector. The interviewees express that other's decision to be in their career path within the “traditional” for-profit sector belongs to them; it is their choice. As they then defend their own decision for being in the SSE, they preface with statements such as they will be careful to not generalize about those in the private sector (Erwin). There is also restraint in the choice of words that may have a negative connotation. For example, Floch used neutral expressions when comparing to his peers working in bigger enterprises, he would say that they have a lifestyle (adds a pause to reflect on his choice of words) that is on a different scale than his.

By their discourse, they demonstrate an understanding of the subjectivity of moral values and demonstrate respect of others' subjective experiences and choices. This may mitigate the potential

criticism or positioning of being overly critical and judgmental as they consider both sides of the perspective. At the same time, they unintentionally provide a hierarchy of values when comparing others to the essence of the SSE. Specifically, this happens when Erwin says that the SSE is more than just providing a job, having their own flexibility, doing things in their own way. This comparative statement puts the values espoused by the SSE as more important than other values. This creates a dilemma where they justify their choice to be in the SSE and try to respect others' career path that is not in the SSE.

8.1.13. Not defined by their work (dilemma present)

One interviewee, Isabel, expresses an interesting point of view upon my questioning on the meaning of work for her. Through her answer, she positioned herself as not defined by her work by saying that she is not her job. Ego was said to be built through the high-status titles she would derive from her work positions and this ego was a challenge for her transition. She had to gain more humility.

Speaking about the ego and to distance her self-worth from her previous work status allows her to achieve authenticity as being involved within the SSE is no longer driven by the pursuit of external validation. Her outward sense of self appears guided towards an internal focus of doing the right thing. This challenges the pressure of societal norms prioritizing career achievement that she discussed about. On the other hand, detachment from work identity in the SSE creates a dilemma. Since values can be used to construct someone's identity and since the work they are doing are an extension of their values, their work becomes an extension of their identity. What the statement may simply suggest is that work should not be the main source of their identity.

8.2. Overview of subject positioning moves

The Table 8.1 summarizes the subject positioning actions employed by the interviewees. These are the patterns of discourse that the speakers adopt, but one does not necessarily perform all these subject positioning. As much as the use of some of these discursive actions could have been caused by a particular question I asked them, the interviewees were free to express that a certain theme was not relevant for their transition.

Table 8.1: Summary table of subject positioning moves

Subject positioning Positioning oneself as...	How is the discursive move performed? They position themselves by...	What are the implications of this positioning?
In continuity with the past	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding parallels between their previous roles and current engagements in the SSE • Reframing their previous work role in humanistic terms (e.g., being a consultant vs. helping others) • Presenting personality traits, interests, or skillsets that are still relevant and/or present now 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieves legitimacy • Achieves authenticity: consistency in part of their identities • Justifies previous work experiences • Provides a coherent rationale for having changed career towards the SSE • Prevents a potential narrative gap
Different from who they were and what they used to believe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing important changes in their beliefs and identity • Critically reassessing and judging their past through questioning their previous ideology, goals • Describing their previous work as having a negative impact on society • Using passive voice to describe past events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates capacity to change their identities (work identity, ideologically based identity) which allows construction of new identities with less ideological dilemmas • Distances their current selves from their previous identities which allows detachment from these identities • Creates a narrative of redemption
Having changed career due to chance events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recounting unexpected work experiences that made them aware about the existence of the SSE, which in turn got them interested to seek opportunities to be involved within the SSE • Recounting personal events, such as a burnout and a societal disruption like the COVID pandemic that catalyzed their desire to find for a career path that aligned with their values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggests limited agency over career options in the past • Suggests that external factors have an important influence on their choice • Portrays the SSE as being underrepresented and not considered as career options • Suggests the role of negative emotions in catalyzing the desire of seeking career change • Achieves authenticity: the transition towards SSE appears to be a natural progression rather than an imposed decision
Not selfish, ethical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving examples of unethical, self-serving behaviours/practices they do not agree with • Alluding to the idea that the SSE is more than just about providing a job to others, being independent, fulfilling one's personal interest, gaining mastery • Recognizing that their previous work experiences were limited in terms of social benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates awareness of unethical behaviours • Constructs an archetype or counterexample of identity to not follow (e.g., self-serving behaviours) • Provides justifications for changing career • Critiques previous work environments
A modest saviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentioning that those they aim to provide their service/contribution for as being in difficulty and in need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positions the receiver of their services or work as victims • Gives importance to their role within the SSE

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis is put on the importance of helping those in need • Referring to the consideration about the societal and environmental impact • Relativizing their social contribution in the grand scheme of things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets the self-expectations about one's limited capacity to improve society through the element of modesty • Reduces the self-aggrandizing connotation in a saviour narrative
Aligned with their values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validating their transition by expressing a sense of fulfillment after the change • Validating their transition by speaking about the positive impact of their work • Questioning the traditional metrics of success such as attaining higher salary, going up the hierarchy, getting a house in favour of gaining satisfaction from humanistic value-based outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieves authenticity: the emotion of fulfillment serves as a confirmation of being aligned • Validates their career transition • Challenges conventional success metrics as source of fulfillment
Evolved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the notion of evolution to describe their current self • Prefacing the notion of evolution by distancing from beliefs that do not align with their values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a point of self-comparison • Distances themselves from part of their previous identity • Embraces their new, more socially and ethically guided, identity • Demonstrates self-awareness
More aware	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claiming of realizing the extent of the societal impact of their work • Claiming of realizing that their quest of productivity/performance did not make them happy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieves authenticity • Achieves commitment: ignorance can be used as an excuse to not act morally, so awareness can diminish the use of ignorance as an excuse to not act morally • Demonstrates introspectiveness and learning capability
Driven by moral desire rather than only driven by interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describing early career choices as a result of following one's interests towards a certain industry or a particular skillset • Reasoning later career choices (within the SSE) through the moral implication of their work such as the social impact and their desire to contribute – the notion of interest is still present nonetheless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates moral agency: not dictated by external factors or by self-interest
Not being in SSE due to a lack of skill Having moral conviction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framing their career transition as not being caused by not being successful in their previous roles • Framing their change as being a proactive choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counters the perception of SSE as a career downgrade (requiring fewer skills or as a backup plan)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing that they have the skills to work in a role in an industry that do not fit with their values, but they willingly choose to not do so • Using external perspective to praise their capacity (saying that they were recognized for their skills) in their previous job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggests that they are not incompetent (affirms competency and capability) • Builds legitimacy and respect • Illustrates commitment to the SSE and integrity
No longer dictated by the need of financial security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentioning that the transition requires making financial sacrifices (i.e., being less well paid) • Justifying the sacrifice in salary by the gain in personal and ethical satisfaction they (would) derive from their work within the SSE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates moral agency: not dictated by financial incentives • Demonstrates acceptance: a loss in salary is reframed as a win in moral gain
Not judging individuals in the “traditional” career path (dilemma present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing that others’ decision to be in the traditional for-profit sector belongs to them • Prefacing with statements that they will be careful to not generalize when comparing • Negating choice of words that may have a negative connotation • Highlighting the uniqueness of each individual’s journey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an understanding of subjectivity of moral values • Demonstrates respects of others’ subjective experiences and choices • Mitigates potential criticism of being overly critical and judgement: presents their narrative as balanced and fair, while considering both sides • Unintentionally hierarchizes their moral values as more important than other values
Not defined by their work (dilemma present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing that they do not longer derive their identity from their job • Distancing from having self-worth tied to their work status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieves authenticity: involvement in the SSE is not driven by the pursuit of external validation (internal focus) • Challenges societal norms that prioritize career achievements over other forms of achievements • Creates a dilemma: by trying to detach their identity from their work status, the person will end up deriving their identity from the value of their work

8.3. What main challenges are these positionings aim to resolve?

Based on the selected relevant subject positions, there are three main underlying goals that these positions aim to resolve. When the interviewees position themselves as something or in a particular way – either explicitly or implicitly, willingly or unwilling (there are no ways to tell what is really going on in their internal world) – they are non-exclusively and potentially addressing the concerns over their legitimacy as a proponent of the SSE, attempting to make sense and use of their past experiences and selves, and managing their personal and social expectations. I will detail these three challenges that the mobilized subject positions by the career transitioners address and resolve. A summary table is presented at Figure 9.1.

The subject positions may be categorized in more than one challenge as they accomplish multiple actions within their discursive context. It does not mean that once they position themselves as such, they resolve all the challenges, but rather each position contributes to addressing different aspects of these challenges incrementally. It may also depend on how these positionings are being performed, and which interpretative repertoires are being used. On the receiving end of the career transitioner's discourse, the receivers of the message are free to accept or decline their position in another context and based on how they position themselves in turn.

8.3.1. Addressing concerns of legitimacy

One of the primary challenges is the need to provide and maintain legitimacy when they are transitioning towards the SSE (either planned transition or finished transition). The transition from the private sector to the SSE can be suggested by others as a downgrade, particularly if the SSE roles are spoken as less lucrative or prestigious. There is also the worry of proving that they are doing the transition for the right reasons and to perhaps, not emulate greenwashing or social washing, for example. The need to prove that their heart is at the right place is of important concern (being authentic), but there is also the need to prove that what they are doing, or going to do, corresponds to the values promoted by the SSE (doing the right thing) and that they can do it (exercising agency). To address concerns of legitimacy, the career transitioners position themselves as:

- In continuity with the past:

- Not selfish, ethical
- Aligned with their values
- More aware
- Driven by moral desire rather than only driven by interests
- **Not being in SSE due to a lack of skill** | Having moral conviction
- No longer dictated by the need of financial security

These positionings demonstrates their convictions through the enactment of moral agency and by mentioning that they are consciously taking action based on intrinsic motivations rather than by being influenced by other factors.

8.3.2. Attempting to reconcile with their past (coherence)

Another challenge is to reconcile their current identities with their past selves in order to establish coherence in their identities. How they position themselves now will raise questions about their past, who they once were. This may involve addressing the dissonance between their previous ideologies and their current values, making sense of their past experiences. This reconciliation involves a process of selecting which identities to keep and which ones to distance from. By identifying as agreeing with the values of the SSE, it may limit how they are approaching their reconciliation with their past selves. They do so by positioning as:

- In continuity with their past
- Different from who they were and what they used to believe
- Having changed career due to chance events
- Aligned with their values
- Evolved
- More aware
- Driven by moral desire rather than only driven by interests
- No longer dictated by the need of financial security
- Not defined by their work

By establishing continuity in their identities (such as their values), it suggests consistency in their selves which provides a logical reasoning of their career change. To resolve the discrepancy

of identities, they justify it through their unawareness about part of themselves and attributing part of the blame towards how they were raised by society, which tends to put emphasis on financial gain, pressure, external validation as a source of motivation. Their change of identity is then not represented necessarily as a drastic change for some, but all their narrative required, to some extent, talking about a chance event that catalyzed this change. To decide to go towards the SSE without justifying previous career choices that were not related to the SSE, without blaming circumstances or not having an unexpected event to change their career path, may appear odd since one could wonder why the sudden change.

8.3.3. Managing personal and social expectations (code of conduct)

The third challenge involves managing both personal and social expectations. It attends to how they navigate societal pressures and how they are fitting or diverging from the identities given to them by the discourse of the transition towards the SSE. This represents a form of code of conduct that will help with guiding them in their actions. There is also an element of how they should regulate their own expectations towards other individuals. To set clear expectations about how one should act and undertake their career path when transitioning towards the SSE, they position themselves as:

- Different from who they were and what they used to believe
- Not selfish, ethical
- A modest saviour
- Driven by moral desire rather than only driven by interests
- Not being in SSE due to a lack of skill | **Having moral conviction**
- No longer dictated by the need of financial security
- Not judging individuals in the “traditional” career path
- Not defined by their work

By their positioning, they often challenge the “traditional” success metrics. By changing careers to the SSE, which is hinted as an atypical career option by the lack of a clearly defined path, they need to find new metrics of guidance. These positionings allow the construction of which identities they should not emulate to guide them through this less well-defined path. Counter examples are often presented. As no well-defined path seems to be present for the SSE career path,

it may be harder to be defined by their work. It requires them to construct their identities in terms of values, and desired societal outcomes. These desires of having positive societal impacts can appear out-of-reach due to their ambition and this expectation may be mitigated by downplaying the grandiosity of the intent. Nonetheless, their guiding principles remains within the realm of morality rather than solely based on personal values rooted in the self such as mastery and interests. When they present the SSE as a preferable option in terms of moral convictions, they seldomly blame others for not following the same change as them. This may be due to the discourse of SSE being rooted in a holistic perspective. This restrains the expectations they may have for others and responds to the potential expectations of a member of the SSE as respecting of others' subjective experiences. It is a construction of a code of conduct towards oneself and towards others.

Part IV

Discussion and Conclusion

For Part IV of my thesis, I will discuss on what I have established and learned from the results of my study in chapter 9. Also in that chapter, the implications on the theoretical, methodological, and practical implications will be discussed. These reflections will lead to open on future research direction to explore parts of the topic that I have not covered in depth in chapter 10. In chapter 11, I will finally wrap-up the whole research with a general reflection on my personal experience.

9. Discussion

9.1. Goal of the thesis

This thesis's goal was to answer the following question: **how do individuals position themselves when they narrate their career transition, more specifically a transition from the private for-profit sector towards the social and solidarity economy (SSE), and what do these positionings perform?** To understand how we may better help individuals make a career transition towards the SSE, and to understand the process itself as a whole and what it may tell us about society, I interviewed individuals who changed careers or is currently in the process of changing careers to be involved within the SSE. The semi-structured interviews I conducted aimed to emulate questions that individuals would be typically asked when asked about their career transition in a natural conversational context. From the data I selected, I focused on the subject positions present in the participants' narratives.

9.1.1. Summary of the findings

To summarize, I will first describe the categorization of the positionings of the individuals and then dive into the essence of the subject positions.

9.1.1.1. Three main challenges

In summary, what this research found were the ways participants position themselves, either willingly or inadvertently, to make sense of their career transition through the recollection of their past, their reflections of the present, and the projection of their future. Albeit not entirely transposable, this temporal evaluation of the past, present, and future, echoes the three main challenges an individual is resolving when they transition from the private for-profit sector towards the SSE. These three challenges consist of addressing concerns of legitimacy, attempting to reconcile with their past, and managing personal and social expectations (see Figure 9.1). I will describe each of these challenges and explain how it can relate to one temporal element.

First, there is a need to provide and maintain their legitimacy when changing careers, since it can be presented as a downgrade career move as it can be described as less lucrative and less

prestigious due to the lack of hierarchical discourse. There is also the worry of authenticity of their action due to instances of questionable intentions. For example, greenwashing (extract I64) and social washing (extract E44), instances of inauthentic expression of the values of the SSE, were mentioned during interviews. Greenwashing and social washing are a presentation of an environmentally responsible public image in of responses due to external pressures rather than from a voluntary basis. The phenomenon of greenwashing is related to corporate legitimacy (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020). From a temporal standpoint, establishing legitimacy is a concern of the present where, through their subject positioning, the individual is proving to themselves or others whom they are right now is being authentic.

Second, another challenge is to establish coherence and consistency in their identities since there may be discrepancies between their past selves and current identities. This involves a process of presenting past identities that are still maintained and distancing from past identities they no longer adhere to. Continuity and discontinuity are both important of consideration; if there is continuity, then what does it say about whom they once were in an environment that does not correspond to their current ambitions? Attributing a cause of change to chance events, out of their control, absolves individuals from justifying a decision, it just explains the cause of the decision. Also, claiming of being more aware frees the individual from justification as it implicitly presents their past as more ignorant. These positionings build a coherent story as to why up until the chance event, they did not change careers even if they have shared similarities between their past selves and current selves. This evidently connects to concerns of the past.

Third, there is a need of managing personal and social expectations through a construction of a code of conduct. The construction of a code of conduct is facilitated by the subject positions the individual performs. This set expectations about how one should act and undertake their career path. For example, when they take a positioning of someone that is *not selfish (ethical)*, that is *no longer dictated by the need of financial security*, or that is *not defined by their work*, it provides the individual with the discourse of these identities which may come with a set of repertoires that dictates what is possible and not possible to be in those circumstances. Also, when the participant of my study positions themselves as such, they sometimes also provide examples of counter-identities which further guide their code of conduct, more specifically, how they should

not behave. A connection we can make with the temporal element is the projection into the future. In other words, the positionings guide individuals as to how they should act in the future.

Figure 9.1: Classification of subject positions within the main challenges being addressed



9.1.1.2. Subject positions

Without getting into the details of each subject positions, I will briefly summarize the essence of their positioning and what they are accomplishing through that positioning. Most of the subject positions are related to the values of the SSE, their retrospection of their past and current selves, and their relationship with work and what work provides for them in terms of external and intrinsic motivations. These subject positions serve to resolve the three main challenges as explained above.

Since participants may present their past work experiences and current (or projected) work role as having opposing philosophies – work in the private sector as being profit-oriented, sometimes at a social cost, and work in the SSE as valuing human well-being – they navigate within an ambiguous storyline where their past identities may enter in conflict with their current selves. In navigating this blurry identity landscape, participants hold onto elements of their past identities while letting go of others. For example, from a moral perspective, they present themselves as having the enduring trait of being ethical and caring about others. Continuity of their moral self was reinforced by using temporal markers (e.g., “*toujours*”), and reframing their past work experiences in humanistic terms.

To explain the discrepancy between their past choices and how they position themselves as morally driven, they present themselves as being more aware now, suggesting they were more ignorant in the past. Attributing the discovery of the SSE due to unforeseen events also suggests unawareness about career possibilities within that sector. This ignorance justifies the incoherence of their past career choices and their enduring identities. Another way of justifying past decisions that may not be in adequation with their ethical self is by using a parent life role as a reason for prioritizing financial security in order to provide for their family.

Aside from presenting themselves as having continuity in their identities, participants also present discursive strategies of discontinuity. To distance themselves explicitly from past identities, they critically reassess and judge their past ideological and professional identity. For example, they would mention that they are no longer “neoliberal” (ideological identity) or that, following the normative expectations of being high-achieving and ambitious in their professional life such as being performant, climbing up the hierarchy (professional identity) did not make them happy. Emotions were used as a source of confirmation for their beliefs.

Overall, the ways individuals position themselves in the context of a career transition from the private for-profit sector towards the SSE can be attributed to resolving three main identity challenges: proving their legitimacy as a proponent of the SSE, making sense and use of their past experiences and selves, and managing their personal and social expectations.

In terms of the broader implications of my findings, I would not qualify these discoveries as groundbreaking; my findings have rather consolidated the different disconnected research on

career transitions both in the specific context of a transition towards the SSE and as a general phenomenon. They also deepen the understanding on these topics by identifying the underlying discursive mechanisms through which the processes involved in career transitions unfold. These contributions are present on a theoretical, methodological, and practical level.

9.2. Theoretical implications

9.2.1. Career transition literature

Reflecting on the literature review of career and career transitions, the way individuals spoke about their transition appears to emphasize the altering of the subjective state of a career (values, needs, aspirations, self-assessments, self-concept) as presented by Louis (1980). This suggests that the “private for-profit to SSE” transitions are rather a result of changes in orientation to a role, which eventually led to a desire to changing role. On top of this emphasis, changing careers to the SSE is an amalgamation of different types of interrole transitions which may imply leaving the labour pool to reassess their career, then changing profession or occupational specialization. In other cases, it may simply imply moving from one organization to another. At the same time, when individuals present themselves as in continuity with their identity, the altering state of values appears less applicable. It becomes quite confusing to properly assess this transition based on this categorization.

These issues make this categorization insufficient for studying career transitions. Even further attempts to create a typology of career transitions appear rather futile as the temporal consideration changes the way a career transition would be studied. For example, when there is a mismatch between a career and someone’s values, quitting the labour pool is only one step to achieve this goal of aligning values rather than an end in itself. Within Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021)‘s five theoretical perspectives, this would consist of studying using the lens of decision making, or adjustment, and even identity. Attempts to categorize career transitions into types risk becoming deprecated and incomplete for research. What I rather propose is seeing those as strategies to achieve a certain goal the individual has in mind. For example, desiring to contribute to society, may lead to someone to change company, or change the orientation of their current role. Most of

the participants of my study reported the desire to bring positive change in society, this desire took the forefront of their value system after becoming more aware and led them to take multiple steps to better align their values with their career. From that perspective, categorizing seems like a secondary task, only to have an idea of the factors that could be influencing the outcomes. Unless the individual's goal is specifically to quit the labour pool, Akkermans et al. (2024)'s self-regulating model is better at capturing the whole dynamic of the transition. Then again, quitting the labour pool may only be the action taken resulting from a change of a subjective state.

The question that should be rather asked is “when is a career transition successful?” Mussagulova et al. (2023) explored this question. Regardless of the timeline we are observing, since the notion of success could change for an individual, as mentioned by some participants, what matters most is what they consider as successful in the present moment. Emotional satisfaction appears to be one of the criteria of evaluating the extent of the success of their transition. In the situation where an individual considers their career successful when it allows them to solve climate change, how should we approach this conversation?

These studies are useful for prompting questions and find better ways to help individuals change careers when they desire, but in a narrative career identity perspective, are all the variables and boundaries relevant for helping them if they do not appear in their discourse? At the same time, should we take for granted what they consider as pertinent for their transition?

9.2.2. Work identities and narratives

Within the context of narration, my results did not reveal any new ideas regarding the importance of identities when individual narrate their career transition. The results confirm the presence of continuity in narratives and discontinuity as well. It supports the importance that individuals from Western societies attribute to maintaining coherence in their selves through looking for patterns, repetitions (Burr, 2015; Edley, 2001); through the different positionings, individuals prove their legitimacy, thus suggesting authenticity and integrity which aids in building coherence in their sense of identity. When changing career into a new sector that can be considered as incompatible with their previous career path, we could assume that one would describe themselves as a changed person, but in the context of this study, they present consistencies within their identities for the most part. This does not mean that there is no change in identity. Dina and Isabel presented a

higher degree of dissociation from their past selves such as no longer identifying as a neoliberal and no longer defined by their job, but they do present elements of continuity within their identity (e.g., interested in economy, dedicated to their work). As for discontinuous identities, Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010) suggested that narratives facilitate rupture and it is the case for the type of career transition I studied. Individuals create this rupture by distancing themselves from their past identities as previously explained through disavowing their previous ideological and professional identity. While Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010)'s developed process model on narrative identity work in role-related interactions focuses on narrative repertoires for people to accomplish their identity goals in social interactions, I have rather focused on the identities that people are trying to accomplish, which further expands on the model, but within the context of the transition towards the SSE.

Another discursive strategy to achieve rupture was to construct counter-identities. These counter-identities are archetypes of individuals they do not wish to emulate. For example, the individual would create a representation of a bad consultant acting in self-interest and through this representation, they become aware of behaviours that they do not wish to adopt. This serves as a counter-guiding principle. It would be interesting to study the prevalence of comparative statements at different stages of the career transition.

The presence of past identities and the construction of new selves based on identities provided by the SSE discourse is also similar to Niendorf et al. (2022)'s work. Their work revealed the complexities of identities reformation and the struggle to reconcile commercial values with nonprofit missions. The researchers argue that managers who are able to blend multiple logics are more apt in engaging within a new institutional setting (e.g., in the non-profit) and my study supports the multiplicity of strategies in blending elements of the past and future within the present. My analysis highlighted the capacity for individuals to both identify and to dissociate from their past experiences and identities so that their new work aligns better with their goal of societal contribution. Theoretical models of career transitions should account for more ideological dilemmas and identity conflicts that individuals may experience during that process, especially when moving from the private for-profit sector to the SSE. This will allow the development of new interpretative repertoires that individuals can mobilize to resolve potential conflicts of logics in certain contexts which may help them with adapting to a new institutional setting.

Another theoretical implication arising from this study, which supports the life-design model as covered in the history of career counseling, is highlighting the blurred boundaries between professional and personal identities. In the global economy era, one cannot expect their job title to fully capture and express their work identity (Savickas & Savickas, 2019). The findings suggest that career transitions towards the SSE are not merely professional changes, but also deeply personal transformations. Participants often narrated their transitions in ways that intertwined their professional roles with personal values and ethical considerations. Their transition is not solely based on narratives of practicality and self-interest (e.g., surviving, gaining skills, finding their passion, finding what interests them), it is rather based on a narrative of collective vision which resides externally to them (e.g., having a positive impact, contributing to society). This confirms the core characteristics of postmodern society where life course patterns are deinstitutionalized, in this case, especially for those transitioning towards the SSE, where they have the responsibility for understanding their own needs and managing their career, and the meaning of success (Savickas & Savickas, 2019). Individuals were brought to question the notion of traditional success and without a well-defined career path, their moral principles were used as a source of guidance. Concretely, when studying careers within the SSE, one's involvement within the SSE is a reflection of their own sense of morality, so how do we distinguish professional and personal identities anymore? This moral guidance takes the form of value-alignment as found in Cohen-Scali et al. (2015)'s research, but is particularly defined by the concept of intrinsic values. Future research should focus on identifying narratives of intrinsic motivation, rooted in humanistic values, and analyzing how these narratives are being used.

9.2.3. Societal and cultural influences

On a macro scale, using the CDP approach, this study reveals some of the culturally available repertoires that shape our understanding of the SSE as a career option and which subject positions are available within that topic. In fact, the SSE, prior to the transition, is not really considered as a career for most of the participants of my study. When I initially presented the concept of "career", defined as the culmination of work-related and other relevant experiences (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009), the way the participants spoke about the SSE suggests that this definition is not fully applied for that sector. Their narratives frequently lacked the traditional markers of career development

such as career progression, or skill acquisition. The involvement within the SSE is more of a lifestyle choice; an end by itself.

In the same vein, this study also reveals the propensity for choosing programs of study or career based on interests rather than values. While the SSE can be considered as an area of interest, discussions about it is often framed as a way of life rooted in values as I have demonstrated in my analysis. Some professional careers, such as becoming a doctor, are naturally discussed in terms of values, with individuals describing their work as saving lives. The inherent value alignment is clear and straightforward requiring possibly little justification or rationalization. In contrast, fields like software engineering, may be more ambiguous when describing itself in terms of value alignment. This would obviously depend on the industry that we would be talking about. The motivation behind choosing a career in software engineering, may be more likely described in terms of personal interest, skill development, or market demand rather than fundamental commitment to societal values. Understanding these nuances underscores the importance of integrating both interests and values when speaking about careers for students that have not yet graduated, for example, in a career fair. At the same time, how does this discourse compete with family education? There are career assessments tools that are based on value measurements to guide individual to examine, clarify, and integrate self-knowledge (Dobson et al., 2013), but if people are aware of the importance of value in choosing a career, why did the concept of interest was more present when individual spoke about their initial career choices?

Another theoretical implication is the importance of evaluating discursive strategies employed as individuals legitimize their career transitions towards the SSE as it challenges certain social norms and expectations. For example, even if atypical career paths are more and more common in the global economy era, the notions of climbing up the corporate ladder, of being successful, financially stable, have been challenged by the participants. Even if some reported that their friends and family were supportive of their transition, they have nonetheless presented a period of negative emotions before conquering these challenges. Obviously, for some, less emotional turmoil was present in their discourse. This finding is in line with CDP, which emphasizes the interplay between individual narratives and broad social and cultural discourses. Discourse both restrict and empower agency. It has been argued that there is an unresolved problem of how human agency might be addressed within a social constructionist framework since people are products of

discourses and our actions, words, and thoughts appear to be by-products of larger linguistic entities we may be unaware of (Burr, 2015).

9.2.4. *Chance events*

Nelson (2017) and Schlosser et al. (2017)'s works underscore the role of chance events in career transitions towards the nonprofit. My findings confirm the importance of chance events as participants of my study, when asked about the reasons they changed career, provided explanations of events that were unplanned and out of their control. Cohen-Scali et al. (2015)'s study also presented events that prompted individuals to change careers to the SSE. In their study, relational conflicts at work, enterprise crises, etc., causing burnout, stress, disenchantment, were some of the cited chance events that led to the desire of change. It is to note that my own finding may be biased since the targeted individuals for my study were those who transitioned from the for-profit sector to the SSE, meaning that to explain a significant transition, they were expected to provide external reasons for changing. Epiphany emerging out of nowhere may seem implausible for prompting someone to change drastically. For those who chose to be involved within the SSE right in the beginning, chance events might not have been as an important element of narration since there is no important change of circumstances. The theoretical implication is that there is a need to do a comparative study of individuals who were involved directly within the SSE and how they talk about their career. I may help with identifying other motivational factors or discursive strategies at play.

9.3. Methodological implications

The social constructionist and the positivist approach to studying career transition are incompatible in their philosophy, but they may be more complimentary than we think. If we consider Akkermans et al. (2024)'s self-regulating model (see Figure 3.2), they have separated the model into three temporal phases: before, during, after. This element of temporality is crucial in narration. By relying on the suggested self-regulating model, it can help with constructing a map of representation of the different topics that can arrive in a "natural" conversation. When people speak, they will bring up elements of cause and effect, similarly to positivist research, but the

discursive analysis approach enriches this by capturing the ways in which the speakers construct these ideas and what they are trying to do with it. In turn, these findings can contribute to expanding existing models or provide new directions when studying from a positivist perspective. New patterns of causality could emerge from the combination of these two epistemological approaches.

Sullivan and Al Ariss (2021) identified a knowledge gap in studying the interaction between multiple identities and their influence on the individual's career transition process, but as mentioned, not many identities were necessarily present or extensively spoken about in the participants' narrative. Age was mentioned a few times, as was the role of a parent and their previous job titles, but they appeared more incidental in presenting the normative expectations that may have influenced their decisions. It does not mean that the discourse around these identities did not have an influence on their narration, but participants referred more often to identities that were aligned with how they represented the SSE: ethical, moral, respectful of others, and humanistic. It does not mean either that other identities are not worthy of investigating, but in this context, what appears to be more important for individuals is to present themselves as moral actors and having moral agency. Once again, this observation could have been an effect from the questions I asked and how this study was framed. Furthermore, Akkermans et al. (2024)'s self-regulating model calls for the examination of more moderating variables. But as suggested previously, if an individual's narration about their transition does not discuss particular identities as moderating variables within a certain process, how much then is that identity relevant in understanding that process? This requires an assessment of which situations call for considering multiple identities when studying career transitions or a single identity would be sufficient. It would vary on an individual basis, as one individual may, for example, consider their age as a greater factor in lowering their capacity to exert agency.

9.4. Practical implications

9.4.1. For career counselors

Career counselors can use the insights from this study to provide tailored guidance for clients with prior experiences within the private for-profit sector that are questioning their current career and

are looking to contribute positively to society. Whether they are aware of the existence of the SSE or not, career counseling can discursively provide strategies for clients in addressing concerns over their legitimacy. Counselors can reinforce their clients' sense of authenticity through validating parts of their previous experiences and skills that could align with the values of the SSE. They can also bring their clients to reframe these past experiences so that it fits with how they want to construct their projected identities. Specifically, they can help with leveraging which identities can provide an answer for the question of "how they want to be?"

Counselor can also ask what type of contribution the individual wants to make. For that to be effective, the counselor themselves should be aware of the existence of the SSE so they can suggest organizations rather than suggesting title of works as those work roles may still not be considered as a career path, which makes it difficult to easily suggest. Suggesting organizations with their mission and value as a point of reference could help clients make clearer decisions.

To resolve potential cognitive dissonance with their past identities, on top of reframing their past experiences, counselors can help their clients identify chance events that could be used as a source of change that may appear or used as a catalyst. These chance events contribute to justifying changes in identities or used as a source of epiphany. Ideas emerging out of nowhere may be harder to explain thus chance events could make more sense to introduce in their storyline. The constructed narrative should emphasize growth and evolution.

As much as it is a common advice to not compare with others, counselors can bring their clients to speak about situations where others have behaved in a way that do not reflect how they would conceive themselves. Using counterexample can temporarily help an individual that is still constructing their new identities. A temporary anti-identity would contribute someone to push them forward, even if it is going towards an unknown direction.

Bringing their clients to talk about what they have realized and what they have become aware of, can help them commit to their (future) choice. Claiming awareness can deepen commitment since ignorance can be used as a justification for having done the "wrong" thing.

Many of the prompts that career counselor may ask their clients are similar to the Schlossberg et al. (1995)'s 4 S's model (see Table 3.4) reference in Cohen-Scali et al. (2015)'s paper. For

example, in the “Strategy” category, one question was “How can you reframe the issues?” which is one of the practical implications I previously suggested. This demonstrates that career counselors may be already aware of these models, and that they are still applicable within the context of a transition towards the SSE. My study contributes to the use of these models as it identifies which aspects of these models appear to be more relevant to tackle when helping clients.

9.4.2. For career transitioners

Similarly to the practical implications for career counselors, individuals who are considering changing careers can reflect on the same elements mentioned above. These discursive strategies should be contributing to establish their legitimacy regarding the values of the SSE. Then, they may reflect on which parts of their identities they can retain and/or make relevant for their future role and reflect on which parts to disavow.

9.4.3. For the SSE

As a society, we can perhaps think about ways we can encourage career path within the SSE, but we have to be mindful of the interpretative repertoires that can restrict moral agency such as financial security or responsibility of a parent. In those cases, more research can be done to expand on discursive strategies for gaining moral agency.

There is also a need to raise awareness, but at the same time, within the findings, it appears that negative emotions and chance events played a role in catalyzing changes. Without these two elements, would the individual be able to construct a narrative compelling enough to drive their commitment towards the SSE? This would be another area of study for the SSE in order to make the sector more appealing knowing that there are interpretative repertoires that can restrict moral agency.

10. Future Research Direction

While this study offers valuable insights into the mobilized identities of participants when speaking about their career transition, my findings cannot be generalized. First, I have a very limited sample size of participants and I exclusively interviewed people from western societies. I also narrowed to individuals who had previous experience as a consultant. A larger sample would have potentially revealed additional patterns and positioning. Opening the selection criteria to other types of experiences or roles could have provided more insight as well. At the same time, trying to cover all types of background experiences could have also made it more difficult to analyze the data as it may have yielded too much heterogeneous findings to establish any type of patterns. Future studies could expand the pool of participants and confirm whether or not these patterns and identities are present regardless of their localization for example or their specific previous work role.

Second, the interviews were made from a particular snapshot of time. For example, an individual talking about their transition as they are living through the changes compared to the same individual talking about the same topic once they have completed their transition could lead to a recollection of different elements of their story. In my study, I have participants on both timeline positions. A future study could focus on either completed transition or ongoing transition and observe if there are a difference in the information that the participants decide to put forth.

Third, since this study is based on a social constructionist epistemology, the interpretation I made could be very different for another person conducting the study as there is no single “truth”. Also, if another person conducted the study, maybe the participants could have answered differently. Furthermore, an interview is only one form of interaction, so in a different context such as doing a presentation, or conversing between colleagues, the identities made relevant could have varied. My positioning as a student-researcher doing his master’s thesis may have influenced the participants to want to contribute to my research, thus inciting them to say things they would have not otherwise or withhold information since I would have to publish my findings. I also have “infected” the conversation with my own interpretation of their words and had to choose which follow-up question I had to ask based on which topic I think would have been interesting to clarify

further into. Subsequently, the way I selected and framed subject positionings when analyzing the conversation can also be caused by the theories I have read. For example, by reading about continuity, I may have the tendency to try to identify those elements.

Finally, since the participants for the most part shared the values of the SSE before their transition, future studies could instead investigate the case of individuals who shared opposing values to the SSE or prioritized other values. Another case study would be individuals who left the SSE in favour of the for-profit sector. This could serve as a point of comparison to see which discursive strategies are similar and where they differ.

11. Conclusion

This study has been very personal for me as it has been an investigation into myself and a reflection of my personal journey since I am undergoing a career transition as well. After questioning my own belief system during the COVID pandemic where we had more time to reflect on ourselves by being trapped, it led me on a quest to figure out what I wanted to do, what I wanted, and what I valued. In an attempt to resolve these questions, I applied for the master's in social innovation management at HEC Montreal. In retrospect, this was a way to gain legitimacy since I wanted to work in a non-profit or on a societal issue and had no prior experience within those areas. I also decided to quit my job in software development in the private sector, since it became harder to do what I was doing due to my shift in perspective. What I learned during my studies at HEC Montreal gave sense to what I had felt about the world but was unable to put into words. It provided me with concrete examples, clear concepts, and alternative visions. Everything made more sense after completing these courses.

When it was the time for me to find a topic for my thesis, I ended up choosing to study career transitions from the for-profit sector towards the SSE. As much as I had figured out a little bit more about what I valued at that point, I still did not know what the future would look like by going down this path. This choice of topic for my thesis was then in the hope of suppressing the uncertainty I felt about my career. At the same time, I also had this desire of trying to find solutions to our societal issues and what better ways to do by understanding my own process of changing careers towards the SSE so I could inspire others to do the same. At the same time, I was, and still am, fearing the possibility of turning back and work for the private sector. This thought puts me in an ambiguous situation where I reconsidered the intention behind my thesis: was I trying to prove myself to others and justify my choices more than anything else? The idea of going through all the struggles of quitting work and going back to school, just to end up where I was four years ago felt like it would have been a waste of time.

Reflecting on my research, the findings resonate deeply with my personal experience. The narrative of the participants echoed some of my own struggles and realizations. The desire of aligning my career with my personal values and the challenges of using my past as a reminder of

why I am doing all this which helps me with moving forward. Challenges of legitimacy and identity reconstruction were themes that I also grappled with throughout my journey.

The element of time was also a crucial factor in the way I was thinking about my career. Going through the literature review on narration, it made more sense to me how important time is important for the construction of our identities. Narratives inherently involve a temporal dimension, as they are stories told over time that link past experiences with the present and the future. Having a sense of continuity and coherence to our sense of self requires us to reflect on ourselves at different moments of our lives. In my case, not wanting to waste my time could have an impact on how I would want to position myself.

One of the key takeaways of this study is that narratives are important in shaping and understanding career transitions, not only in the SSE, but simply in general in everyday settings. This is not a novel idea, but by delving deeper into the subject positions, the study contributes to offering more specific practical guidance for career counselors helping individuals undergoing similar types of transitions consisting of a mix of interrole and intrarole transitions.

In conclusion, this thesis has not only been an academic endeavour, but a deeply introspective experience. Sometimes, it felt like looking at myself into the mirror, but at the same time, it felt so foreign. It is as if, from the social constructionism perspective where discourses are culturally made available to us, my identity did not belong to me anymore. I am a patchwork of what I hear and see outside of me. It is a strange experience, almost an out of body experience, but maybe this is the source of beauty of our language, because to share your experience, implies giving a part of you to others and to accept part of others into you. We cannot expect that this process will not be met by resistance from others. We just need to keep in mind that by accepting certain identities, we are rejecting others as well.

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Annexes

Annexe 1: Publication to find participants (EN/FR)

HELP!
PARTICIPANTS NEEDED



THE TRANSITION PROCESS FROM A CONSULTING CAREER IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

An individual hour-long interview to understand the process of careers transition of consultants away from the private sector

REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ Ex-consultant (or consultant)
- ✓ Worked (or works) in the private sector
- ✓ Changed career path (or planning to change)

To participate or receive more information
kenny.nguyen@hec.ca

This research is realized under the context of my master's degree thesis at HEC Montréal. This project was approved by HEC Montréal's Research Ethics Board.
Project number : 2023-4948

SOS!
PARTICIPANT-ES RECHERCHÉ-ES



LE PROCESSUS DE TRANSITION D'UNE CARRIÈRE DE CONSULTATION DANS LE SECTEUR PRIVÉ VERS UNE CARRIÈRE DANS LE SECTEUR DE L'ÉCONOMIE SOCIALE

Une entrevue d'une heure pour comprendre le processus de transition de carrière des personnes ayant travaillé en consultation dans le secteur privé vers le secteur de l'économie sociale

REQUIS

- ✓ Ancien-ne consultant-e (ou consultant-e)
- ✓ A travaillé (ou avait travaillé) dans le secteur privé
- ✓ A changé de carrière (ou planifie de changer)

Pour participer ou recevoir plus d'informations
kenny.nguyen@hec.ca

Cette recherche est réalisé dans le cadre de mon mémoire de maîtrise à HEC Montréal. Ce projet a été approuvé par le comité d'éthique de la recherche de HEC Montréal.
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